

THE REDISCOVERY OF MAN

The Complete Instrumentality of Mankind Stories of Cordwainer Smith

* marks major stories

Introductions and commentaries by J.J. Pierce

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1st Introduction (from The Best of Cordwainer Smith)

Cordwainer Smith: The Shaper of Myths

In an obscure and short-lived magazine called Fantasy Book, there appeared in 1950 a story called "Scanners Live in Vain."

No one had ever heard of the author, Cordwainer Smith. And it

appeared for a time that he would never be heard from again in the world of science fiction.

But "Scanners Live in Vain" was a story that refused to die, and its republication in two anthologies encouraged the elusive Smith to begin submitting to other SF markets.

Today, he is recognized as one of the most creative SF writers of modern times. But, paradoxically, he is one of the least known or understood. Until shortly before his death, his very identity was a closely guarded secret.

Not that Dr. Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger (1913-66) was ashamed of science fiction. He was proud of the field, and had even boasted once to the Baltiimore Sitn that SF had attracted more Ph.D's than any other branch of fiction.

But he was a sensitive, emotional writer.-- and reluctant to become involved with his readers -- to be forced to "explain" himself in a way that might destroy the spontaneity of his work.

Beyond that, he probably enjoyed being a man of mystery, as elusive as some of the allusions in his stories. Smith was a mythmaker in science fiction, and perhaps it takes a somewhat mythical figure to create true myths.

A new acquaintance unsure of the number of syllables, in Dr. Linebarger's name would be answered by a significant gesture to the three Chinese characters on his tie. Only later would he learn the characters stood for Lin Bah Loh, or "Forest of Incandescent Bliss" -- the name given him as godson to Sun Yat Sen, founder of the Chinese Republic.

Dr. Linebarger's life was certainly several cuts above the ordinary. At the age of seventeen, he negotiated a silver loan for China on behalf of his father -- Sun's legal advisor and one of the financiers of the Revolution of 1911. He later became a colonel in U.S. Army Intelligence, despite partial blindness and general ill health -- he once shocked guests at a dinner party by downing a "cocktail" of hydrochloric acid to aid his digestion.

Although born in Milwaukee -- his father wanted to be sure that as a natural-born citizen his son would be eligible for the presidency -- Linebarger spent his formative years in Japan, China, France and Germany. By the time he grew up, he knew six languages and had become intimate with several cultures, both Oriental and Occidental.

He was only twenty-three when he earned his Ph.D. in political science at Johns Hopkins University, where he was later Professor of Asiatic politics for many years. Shortly thereafter, he graduated from editing his father's books to publishing his own highly regarded works on Far Eastern affairs.

When World War II broke out, he used his position on the Operations Planning and Intelligence Board to draft a set of qualifications for an intelligence operative in China that only he could meet -- so off he went to Chungking as an Army lieutenant. By war's end, he was a major.

Dr. Linebarger turned his wartime experiences into Psychological Warfare, still regarded as the most authoritative text in the field. As a colonel, he was advisor to the British forces in Malaya and to the U.S. Eighth Army in Korea. But this self-styled "visitor to small wars" passed up Vietnam, feeling American involvement there was a mistake.

Travels around the world took him to Greece, Egypt and many other countries; and his expertise was sufficiently valued that he became a leading member of the Foreign Policy Association and an advisor to President Kennedy.

But even in childhood, his thoughts had turned to fiction -- including science fiction. Like many budding SF writers, he discovered the genre at an early age. Since he was living in Germany at the time, he added to the familiar classics of Verne, Wells, Doyle and others such works as Alfred Doblin's Giganten to his list of favorites.

He was only fifteen when his first SF story, "War No. 81-Q," was published. But unfortunately, no one seems to remember where. According to his widow, Genevieve, the story was bylined Anthony Bearden -- a pseudonym later used for poetry published in little magazines. Two examples of this poetry appear in *Norstrilia*, also published by Ballantine.

During the 1930s, Dr. Linebarger began keeping a secret notebook -- part personal diary, part story ideas. Then in 1937, he began writing serious stories, mostly set in ancient or modern China, or in contemporary locales elsewhere. None were ever published, but their range -- some use the same Chinese narrative techniques that later turn up in SF works like "The Dead Lady of Clown Town" -- is remarkable.

While back in China, he took on the name Felix C. Forrest -- a pun on his Chinese name -- for two psychological novels mailed home in installments and published after the war. *Ria* and *Carola* were remarkable novels for their feminine viewpoint and for the subtle interplay of cultural influences behind the interplay of character. Under the name of Carmichael Smith, Dr. Linebarger wrote *Atomsk*, a spy thriller set in the Soviet Union.

But his career in science fiction came about almost by accident. He may have submitted some stories to *Amazing* while still in China during the war; but if so, nothing ever came of them. It was during idle hours at the Pentagon after his return that he turned an idea that had been bothering him into "Scanners Live in Vain."

The story was almost written in vain, for it was rejected by every major publication in the field. *Fantasy Book*, to which it was submitted five years later as a last resort, did not even pay for it. Although he had written another Cordwainer Smith story, "Himself in Anachron" (recently adapted by his widow for Harlan Ellison's anthology *Last Dangerous Visions*) in 1946, he may well have despaired of any recognition in the genre.

But there were readers who took notice. Never mind that *Fantasy Book* had never before published a worthwhile story, never mind that the author was a total unknown. "Scanners Live in Vain" got to them.

"Martel was angry. He did not even adjust his blood away from anger..."

It was more than just the bizarre situation that attracted attention -- it was the way it was treated. From the opening lines, readers became part of Martel's universe -- a universe as real as our own, for all its strangeness. They were intrigued, and no doubt mystified.

What was this Instrumentality of Mankind, which even the Scanners held in awe? What were the Beasts and the manshonyaggers and the Unforgiven? One could sense their importance to the hero, but beyond that -- only wonder. Smith clearly knew more about this universe than he let on -- more, in fact, than he ever would let on. His universe had been forming in his mind at least since the time he wrote his first published story in 1928, and it took further shape in his secret notebook during the 1930s and 1940s.

Already in "War No. 81-Q," his widow recalls, he had made reference to the Instrumentality -- that all-powerful elite hierarchy that was to become central to the Cordwainer Smith stories twenty years and more later. Even the word may have had far more significance than it would appear at first.

Linebarger had been raised in a High Church Episcopalian family -- his grandfather was a minister -- and was devoutly religious. The word "Instrumentality" has a distinct religious connotation, for in Roman Catholic and Episcopalian theology the priest performing the sacraments is the "instrumentality" of God Himself.

At the time he wrote "War No. 81-Q," young Linebarger was also having a fling with Communism -- a tendency his father eventually cured by sending him on a trip to the Soviet Union for his eighteenth birthday. But he remained struck by the sense of vocation and conviction of historical destiny to which Communism appealed.

In Cordwainer Smith's epic of the future, the Instrumentality of Mankind has the hallmarks of both a political elite and a priesthood. Its

hegemony is that, not of the galactic empire so typical of less imaginative SF, but of something far more subtle and pervasive -- at once political and spiritual. Its lords see themselves not as mere governors or bureaucrats or politicians, but as instruments of human destiny itself.

Linebarger's sense of religion infused his work in other ways, and not merely in references to the Old Strong Religion and the Holy Insurgency of Norstrilia and other late works.

There is, for example, the emphasis on quasi-religious ritual -- compare, for instance, the Code of the Scanners to the Saying of the Law in H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Furthermore, there is the strong sense of vocation expressed by the Scanners, sailors, pinlighters, Go-captains and the lords themselves -- something very spiritual, even if not expressed in religious terms.

But Linebarger was no mere Christian apologist who used SF as a vehicle for Orthodox religious messages like those of, say, C.S. Lewis. He was also a social and psychological thinker, whose experience with diverse cultures gave him peculiar and seemingly contradictory ideas about human nature and morality.

He could, for example, admire the samurai values of fantasy, courage and honor, and he showed his appreciation of Oriental art and literature in the furnishing of his home -- and his fiction. Yet he was so horrified by the tradition-bound fatalism and indifference to human life he found in the Orient that he became obsessed with the sanctity of life on any terms, as something too precious to sacrifice to any concept of honor or morality -- Oriental or Occidental.

While in Korea, Linebarger masterminded the surrender of thousands of Chinese troops who considered it shameful to give up their arms. He drafted leaflets explaining how the soldiers could surrender by shouting the Chinese words for "love," "duty" "humanity" and "virue" -- words that happened, when pronounced in that order, to sound like "I surrender" in English. He considered this act to be the single most worthwhile thing he had done in his life.

Linebarger's attitude is reflected in the apparently casual manner in which matters such as brainwashing are treated in his SF. For the Hunter and Elaine at the end of *"The Dead Lady of Clown Town,"* that is a more humane, if less "honorable" fate than death. Throughout the Smith canon, life is usually placed before honor, no matter how much the Oriental codes of honor and formality may permeate the hybrid culture of the future.

Yet Linebarger felt there was a meaning to life beyond mere living. "The God he had faith in had to do with the soul of man and with the unfolding of history and of the destiny of all living creatures," his Australian friend Arthur Burns once remarked; and it is this exploration of human -- and more than human destiny that gives Smith's work its unity.

Behind the invented cultures, behind the intricacies of plot and the joy or suffering of characters, there is Smith the philosopher, striving in a manner akin to that of Teilhard de Chardin (although there is no evidence of any direct influence) to reconcile science and religion, to create a synthesis of Christianity and evolution that will shed light on the nature of man and the meaning of history.

The stories in this volume, collected in their proper order for the first time, form part of a vast historical cycle taking place over some fifteen thousand years. They are based on material from Linebarger's original notebook and a second notebook -- unfortunately lost -- that he began keeping in the 1950s as new problems began to concern him.

Mankind is still baunted by the Ancient Wars and the Dark Age that followed as this volume opens with *"Scanners Live in Vain."* Other stories, one unpublished, hint at millennia of historical stasis, during which the true men sought inhuman perfection behind the electronic pales of their cities, while leaving the Wild to survivors of the Ancient World -- the Beasts, manshonyaggers and Unforgiven.

Into this future came the Vomacht sisters, daughters of a German scientist who placed them in satellites in suspended animation at the close of World War II. Returning to Earth in the latter days of the Dark Age, they bring the "gift of vitality" -- a concept that seems to have meant to Smith what the "life force" meant to Bergson and Shaw -- back to mankind. Founders of the Vomact family, they represent a force in human nature that can be either good or evil, but is perhaps ultimately beyond either, and a necessary means for the working out of human destiny through evolution.

The dual nature of the Vomacts and the force they represent is symbolized in the origin of their name: "Acht" is a German word with a double meaning: "proscribed" or "forbidden" and "care" or "attention." And the Vomacts alternate as outlaws and benefactors, throughout the Smith epic.

But the gift of vitality sets a new cycle of history in motion -- the heroic age of the Scanners, pinlighters and Go-captains. What stands out in these early stories is the starkness of the emotional impact -- the impact of strange new experiences and relationships, whether of the telepathic symbiosis of men and partners in "The Game of Rat and Dragon" or the woman become a functioning part of her spacecraft in "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul."

Some of Linebarger's own experiences went into his work. Captain Wow was the name of one of his cats at his Washington home when he wrote "The Game of Rat and Dragon" at a single sitting one day in 1954. Cat Melanie was later to inspire C'mell, heroine of the underpeople, who were created by men from mere animals. Then, too, Linebarger's frequent stays in hospitals, dependent on medical technology, give him a feel for the linkage of man and machine.

But in "The Burning of the Brain," we already begin to see signs of the Pleasure Revolution, a trend which Linebarger detested in his own time and which he saw putting an end to the heroic age in his imagined future. Near immortality -- thanks to the santaclara drug, or stroon, grown in Norstrilia -- makes life less desperate, but also less meaningful.

Real experience gives way to synthetic experience; in "Golden the Ship Was, Oh, Oh, Oh" (as in "The Lady Who Sailed The Soul," which was also coauthored by Genevieve Linebarger), the hero seeks pleasure directly from an electric current -- and only an epoch-making crisis affords him a chance to see that there is a better way.

Under the ruthless benevolence of the Instrumentality, a bland utopia takes shape. Men are freed of the fear of death, the burden of labor, the risks of the unknown -- but deprived of hope and freedom. The underpeople, created to do the labor of mankind, are more human than their creators. The gift of vitality, seemingly, has been lost, and history come to a stop.

In these stories, it is the underpeople -- and the more enlightened lords of the Instrumentality who heed them -- who hold the salvation of humanity in their hands. In "The Dead Lady of Clown Town," the despised, animal-derived workers and robots must teach humans the meaning of humanity in order to free mankind from its seeming euphoria.

Lord Jestocost is inspired by the martyrdom of the dog-woman D'joan; and Santuna is transformed by the experiences in "Under Old Earth" into the Lady Alice More. Together, they become the architects of the Rediscovery of man -- bringing back freedom, risk, uncertainty and even evil.

Paralleling these events are glimpses of other parts of the universe of the Instrumentality. In "Mother Hitton's Littul Kittons," we learn why Old North Australia is the most heavily defended planet in the galaxy; but Viola Sidcrea is just as strange. And where else in science fiction is there a world like "A Planet Named Shayol," where a daring conception in biological engineering is wedded to a classic vision of Hell?

Oriental narrative techniques especially in "The Dead Lady of Clown Town" and "The Ballad of Lost C'mell" are prominent in the later stories. So is the sense of myth, whereby the just-mentioned stories are supposedly

explanations of popular legends. But just how much of what is told "Under Old Earth" ever really took place?

Smith creates a sense of immense time having passed. To Paul and Virginia, newly freed by the Rediscovery of Man in "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard," our own age is lost in the dim past and is seen only through layer upon layer of half-forgotten history. Smith's effect has rarely been duplicated -- the first half of Robert Silverberg's *Nightwings* is perhaps the most successful approximation.

Smith's universe remains infinitely greater than our knowledge of it -- we shall never know what empire once conquered Earth and brought tribute up that fabulous boulevard; nor the identity of the Robot, the Rat and the Copt, whose visions are referred to in *Norstrilia* and elsewhere; nor what ultimately becomes of the cat-people created in "The Crime and Glory of Commander Suzdal."

Then there is that unfulfilled sense of anticipation -- where was Smith leading us? What comes after the Rediscovery of Man and the liberation of the underpeople by C'mell? Linebarger gives hints of a common destiny for man and underpeople -- some religious fulfillment of history, perhaps. But they remain hints.

The work of Cordwainer Smith will always retain its enigmas. But that is part of its appeal. In reading his stories, we are caught up in experiences as real as life itself-and just as mysterious.

-- Jonn J. Pierce
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey
January, 1975

2nd Introduction (from *The Rediscovery of Man*)

It's trite to say, of course, but there has never been another science fiction writer like Cordwainer Smith.

Smith was never a very prolific SF writer, as evidenced by the fact that nearly all of his short fiction can be encompassed in a single omnibus volume like this. He was never a very popular writer, as evidenced by the fact that most of his work has usually been out of print. Nor has he been a favorite of the critics, as evidenced by the fact that few citations to his SF can be found in journals like *Science Fiction Studies*.

It is impossible to fit Smith's work into any of the neat categories that appeal to most readers or critics. It isn't hard science fiction, it isn't military science fiction, it isn't sociological science fiction, it isn't satire, it isn't surrealism, it isn't post-modernism. For those who have fallen in love with it over the years, however, it is some of the most powerful science fiction ever written. It is the kind of fiction that, as C.S. Lewis once wrote, becomes part of the reader's personal iconography.

You may have already read the story of Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger (1913-66), the man behind Cordwainer Smith, who grew up in China, Japan, Germany, and France, and became a soldier, diplomat, and respected authority on Far Eastern affairs. He was the son of Paul Myron Wentworth Linebarger, a retired American judge who helped finance the Chinese revolution of 1911 and became the legal advisor to Sun Yat-sen. It was Sun himself who gave young Paul his Chinese name Lin Bah Loh, or "Forest of Incandescent Bliss." (His father had been dubbed Lin Bah Kuh, or "Forest of 1,000 Victories.") In time, the younger Linebarger became the confidant of Chiang Kai-shek, and, like his father, wrote about China. Still later, he was in demand at the Department of Asiatic Politics at Johns Hopkins University, where he shared his own expertise with members of the diplomatic corps. And that isn't counting his years as an operative in China during World War II, or as a "visitor to small wars thereafter, from which he became perhaps the world's leading authority on psychological warfare.

He wrote the book on psychological warfare-under his own name, as with all his non-fiction. But he was very shy about his fiction. He wrote two novels, *Ria* and *Carola*, both unusual due to their female protagonists and international settings, under the name Felix C. Forrest, a play on his

Chinese name. But when people found out who "Forrest" was, he couldn't write any more. He tried a spy thriller, *Atomsk*, as Carmichael Smith, but was found out again. He even submitted a manuscript for another novel under his wife's name, but nobody was fooled. Although Linebarger wrote at least partial drafts of several other novels, he was never able to interest publishers, and it appears he never really tried that hard. He might have had a distinguished, if minor, career as a novelist -- it is an odd coincidence that Herma Briffault, widow of Robert Briffault, to whose novels of European politics Frederik PohI would later compare Ria and Carola, had in fact read Carola in manuscript; only she compared it to the work of Jean Paul Sartre!

Yet it isn't only a matter of happenstance, of opportunities elsewhere denied, that Paul M.A. Linebarger became a science fiction writer. In fact, he was writing SF before he wrote anything else. From his early teens, he turned out an incredible volume of juvenile SF, under titles like "The Books of Futurity" -- some bad imitations of Edgar Rice Burroughs, others clumsily satirical or incorporating Chinese legends or folklore. One of these efforts contained, as an imaginary "review," the genesis of "The Fife of Bodidharma," published over 20 years later in its final form. At the age of 15, he even had an SF story published -- "War No. 81-Q," which appeared in *The Adjutant*, the official organ of his high school cadet corps in Washington, DC, in June 1928. Because he used the name of his cousin, Jack Bearden, for the hero, Bearden decided to get back with a story of his own, "The Notorious C39"; but Bearden's story actually made it into *Amazing Stories*. More than 30 years later, Linebarger rewrote "War No. 81-Q" for his first collection of Cordwainer Smith SF stories, *You Will Never Be the Same*, but it didn't make the cut.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Linebarger continued to write short fiction -- some SF, some fantasy, some contemporary or Chinese historical. The manuscripts, including those of the earliest Cordwainer Smith stories, were eventually bound in a red-leather volume now in the hands of a daughter living in Oregon. Most of these stories were apparently never submitted for publication, but Linebarger did send two of the fantasies -- "Alauda Dalma" and "The Archer and the Deep" -- to *Unknown* in 1942. (If you don't recognize the titles, it is because *Unknown* turned them down: the latter didn't fare any better with Judith Merrill in 1961.) Then in 1945, recently returned from China and facing idle hours in some sort of desk job at the Pentagon, he wrote another of the manuscripts included in the bound volume, the one that was to put him on the literary map -- "Scanners Live in Vain."

You doubtless know that it was "Scanners" which introduced the Instrumentality of Mankind, although only as a shadowy background to the bizarre tale of the cyborged space pilots who are dead though they live, and would rather kill than live with a new discovery that has made their sacrifice and its attendant rituals obsolete. Yet however shadowy, that background -- with its references to the Beasts and the manshonyaggers and the Unforgiven, and the implications of some terrible dark age from which humanity has only just emerged -- suggests a long period of gestation for the story and, possibly, the existence of earlier stories with the same background. Only there is no evidence of any such thing; to the contrary, at least some of the background appears to date back to a note Linebarger wrote to himself January 7, 1945, for a projected story, "The Weapons," set in a "future or imaginary world" in which humanity must always be on guard against old weapons, "perpetual and automatic," surviving from some old and forgotten war. In that note, we can see the genesis of the manshonyaggers, the German killing machines (from *menschenjager*, or hunter of men) first referred to in "Scanners Live in Vain."

Can Paul Linebarger have thought up an entire future history in the time it took to write "Scanners Live in Vain"? It is probably a lot more complicated than that; it may well be that a number of ideas that had been floating around in his head for years, without ever being set down on paper, suddenly gelled when he had the inspiration for the story. It didn't take

long for the universe of "Scanners Live in Vain" to take shape, however, for the story had been written within a few months of that note for "The Weapons." On July 18, 1945, it was submitted to John W. Campbell, Jr. at Astounding Science Fiction -- who rejected it as "too extreme." That proved to be the first of several rejections, until "Scanners Live in Vain" finally found a home at Fantasy Book in 1950. The only related story that Linebarger wrote before then was "Himself in Anachron," dated 1946. Never published in a magazine, it was later slated (like the revised "War No. 81-Q") for inclusion in *You Will Never Be the Same*, under the title "My Love Is Lost in the Null of Nought" or "She Lost Her Love in the Null of Nought," but Linebarger wasn't able to deliver a revised manuscript in time. Although he may have written such a revision at a later date, none can be found in his literary papers, and the present version was adapted by his widow Genevieve from the 1946 draft.

The career of Cordwainer Smith might have been stillborn, with only one published and one unpublished story to show for it. Fortunately, Smith soon had a few champions, most notably Frederik Pohl, who didn't have the foggiest idea who the author was but knew a stellar performance when he saw one. By including "Scanners Live in Vain" in an anthology, Pohl rescued it from the obscurity of Fantasy Book, and that led a few years later to Linebarger's submission of "The Game of Rat and Dragon" to *Galaxy*: the rest, as they say, is history. A great deal may not be told until the hoped-for publication of a biography of Linebarger by Alan C. Elms, who has done exhaustive interviews with his friends and family as well as researching all his papers. Among other things, Elms has the low-down on how it happened that the young Linebarger knew L. Ron Hubbard. (It wasn't a mere fluke that one of Linebarger's own unpublished works was *Pathematics*, his revisionist take on Hubbard's *Dianetics*.)

It is important to understand some crucial facts about his life that have previously been overlooked: for example, although he was a devout Episcopalian late in life, he was only a nominal Methodist (his father's church) at the time he wrote "Scanners Live in Vain." He originally joined the Episcopal Church as a compromise with his second wife, who was raised as a Catholic. Only about 1960 did he become a believer in any deep sense, and only then did the religious imagery and Christian message become strong in his SF works. The change in spiritual orientation that marks his later work is thus a genuine change, not merely a change of emphasis. There are also all kinds of details about the life of Paul M.A. Linebarger, his family and friends, that bear on his work -- as we shall see when Elms' researches bear fruit.

The strictly literary history, however, is fascinating in itself. In spite of such major gaps as the loss of Linebarger's main notebook for the *Instrumentality* saga in 1965, and the apparent disappearance of the dictabelts on which his widow recalled that he had recorded notes for or even drafts of stories never committed to paper, it is possible to reconstruct a lot of this literary history from Linebarger's literary papers, now at the University of Kansas (although some, including more juvenilia, and such oddities as an early poem titled "An Ode to My Buick," mistakenly ended up at the Hoover Institution at Stanford, the repository for papers relating to his military, diplomatic, and scholarly career). Among these literary papers are any number of variant (mostly partial) manuscripts for stories already familiar to us, false starts for stories never completed, notebooks with ideas for stories never written, and miscellaneous correspondence.

The story of the *Instrumentality* saga has been told before: the Ancient Wars, the Dark Age, the renaissance of humanity in the time of the Scanners, the romantic age of exploration by sailship, the discoveries of planforming and stroon that bind together the myriad worlds and usher in a bland utopia of ease and plenty, the twin revolutions of the underpeople's Holy Insurgency and the *Instrumentality*'s Rediscovery of Man. The stories in

this volume tell it all better than any summary can. Smith had it all worked out, of course; he even offered to supply a chronology for *You Will Never Be the Same*, which would undoubtedly have been far superior to the one I supplied for *The Best of Cordwainer Smith* for Del Rey Books. But the saga was never conceived as a seamless whole, however much Linebarger worked to develop the overall framework that would embrace both his original conception and his later one.

His working method seemed to be to develop several strands of thought and weave them together, or perhaps let them weave themselves together. This is first evident in the genesis of *"Scanners,"* in which ideas of a future dark age, automatic weapons, the Vomact family, the Scanners themselves, and even the Instrumentality suddenly come together. Subsequent stories developed that background. Both *"Mark Elf"* and the original two-chapter fragment of *"The Queen of the Afternoon"* backtracked to the end of the Dark Age (the latter made no mention of the underpeople in that version, nor did it hint at any Christian themes). *"The Game of Rat and Dragon"* took the saga forward to the heroic age of planofforming, and the vision of the far future in *"No, No, Not Rogov!"* hinted at a secular apotheosis for human history. Both *"When the People Fell"* and *"The Burning of the Brain"* are snapshots of different periods in the same history, as well as compeHing stories in themselves.

In 1958, Linebarger began writing a novel called *Star-Craving Mad*, which was his first attempt at what eventually became *Norstrilia*. But the initial version of the story is far different from that we know today. There is no *Rediscovery of Man*, nor any *Holy Insurgency*. Lord Jestocost and *"Arthur McBan CLI"* both figure here, but in different guises: Jestocost is simply a cruel but shrewd tyrant, whose name ("cruelty" in Russian) has none of the ironic meaning we now associate with it; while McBan is a man of action who comes to the aid of the underpeople only for the love of C'mell. And the rebellion of the underpeople is nothing more than an uprising of the oppressed, like the French Revolution to which it is compared. The E'telekeli appears, but as a future Jacobite rather than a spiritual sage. Linebarger was developing an ironic theme, but it had to do with true men having inadvertently created a race of supermen in the form of the underpeople.

Linebarger apparently wasn't satisfied with the way the story was going, for it was abandoned after a few chapters. Several other false starts over the next year failed to get *Star-Craving Mad* moving again, and a severe illness which Genevieve Linebarger later remembered as the genesis of *Norstrilia* may have actually been the genesis of a spiritual rebirth that changed the entire thrust of the Instrumentality saga. As in the case of *"Scanners Live in Vain,"* however, Paul Linebarger was evidently thinkmg along several lines at once before they all came together.

Even in the original draft of *Star-Craving Mad* there is one hint of the *Rediscovery of Man*, but it remains only a hint. C'mell's father C'mackintosh is not an athlete, but a "licensed robber" at a "savage park" in Mississippi: such parks are a means for humanity to "keep the peace within its own troubled and complex soul," but they are apparently a longstanding institution, not a revolutionary development. In an early false start for *"The Ballad of Lost C'mell,"* Lord Redlady has unleashed ancient diseases on Earth, but not as part of a spiritual revolution: the idea to discourage invasions by developing immunities among Earthmen to patho-gens that can then be used as weapons against outsiders. In another false start, for a story called *"Strange Men and Doomed Ladies,"* Lord Jestocost proposes to end the policy of euthanasia for "spoiled" people such as the crippled, the sickly, the stupid, and even the overly-brilliant: "Let them be, and let us see." But this seems to be an isolated idea, unrelated to any grand plan.

The false start for *"The Ballad of Lost C'mell"* ("Where Is the Which of the What She Did") also opens with a prologue that recounts the entire history of Earth. Our times are the Second Ancient Days; they came before the First Ancient Days, but were discovered later. The First Ancient Days

came either before or after the Long Nothing (a summary of the chronology contradicts the narrative). Civilization was restored by the Dwellers, who brought the cities back into shape around the ruins left by the Daimoni, including Earthport Gulosan. It was during the time of the Dwellers that humanity discovered Space3 and overcame the rule of the perfect men. But that was all long before the time of C'mell. The Originals, invaders from space, overcame the Dwellers, but were later overthrown by an alliance of true men and underpeople. Then came the Bright, who "did things with music and dance, with picture and word, which had never been done before." They also built the peace square at An-fang, and (another contradiction) had something to do with the "fall of the perfect men and the temporary rule of Lord Redlady." Then came a time of troubles, the High Cruel Years, followed by another invasion by the Pure ("men of earth who had been gone too long"), who still rule Earth at the time of the story.

Although the Dwellers may be the true men of "Mark Elf," and the rule of the Bright may have something to do with the Bright Empire mentioned in Norstrilia, nothing in the canon ~f stories we know seems to relate to the Originals or the High Cruel Years or the Pure. Linebarger was apparently reshaping his vision of the far future almost to the moment he wrote "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard," in which it all crystallized. (The "Where Is the Which of the What She Did" fragment has the narrator recalling that "the most blessed of computers burned out on Alpha Ralpa Boulevard," but assigns this to the long-past age of the Dwellers.) During the same period, Linebarger was reshaping "The Colonel Came Back from the Nothing-at-All," a then-unpublished story about the discovery of planofforming, into the story of Artyr Rambo's mystical experience in Space3. The story went through several partial drafts (one titled "Archipelagoes of Stars"), which used different approaches capturing the poetic experience of Arthur Rimbaud. One version quotes Rimbaud's *Le Bateau Ivre* itself, as a prophecy of Space3, and asks, "How knew it he, all the fine points of it -- He an ancient was!" Another draft opens, "They put him into a box, a box. They shot him to the end of time... Then, when it was all over, people discovered that another man, also a singer, had written it all down in the Most Ancient World." The final version, of course, is far more subtle; it was typical of Linebarger to make his stories less straightforward and more allusive in such details.

Although most of the background for the Instrumentality saga was contained in a notebook that Linebarger accidentally left in a restaurant in Rhodes in 1965, another notebook begun during the last year of his life contains ideas for several stories that were never written. Because they are notes to himself, they can be as cryptic as the lyrics of a David Lynch song. But some are clear enough, as far as they go, including those for "The Robot, the Rat, and the Copt," which was originally conceived as a single story but later was a cycle of four stories, like the Casher O'Neill series. We know from references in published stories that the Robot, the Rat, and the Copt were to bring back a Christian revelation from Space3, but the notes don't add much to that, except to confirm that this new dimension is where Christ "had really been and always was experienced." The rat was to have been named R'obert, however, and there was to have been a Coptic planet. (A list of Coptic names -- including Shenuda or "God Lives" -- appear in an entirely different notebook, a ring binder titled "New Science Fiction by Cordwainer Smith," which also includes most of the false starts and first drafts already referred to.)

Some of the ideas seem relatively trivial: a forlorn suitor has the crushed head of his true love, killed in an accident, regrown on Shayol, and reimplanted with her personality; a Go-Captain who has a mysterious (but unspecified) experience in space is treated as a madman on his conservative homeworld. Another story was to have been set on a remote, prosperous world where one-parents gamble on the futures of their newly-issued children; this would evidently have shed more light on the sequential system of child-raising by one-parents, two-parents, and three-parents alluded to in

"Under Old Earth." Another note is simply a name: the Lord Sto Dva, presumably a successor to the Lord Sto Odin of "Under Old Earth."

But the most intriguing note is undoubtedly one for a story called "How the Dream Lords Died." Set in A.D. 6111, it would have involved the use of 12,000 slave brains by the Dream Lords in an attempt to explore other times telepathically, like the Eighteenth Men of the distant future in Olaf Stapledon's Last and First Men. The Dream Lords were clearly among the "others in the earth" after the fall of the Ancient World, alluded to in Norstrilia, and this note is the only reference to any story to have been set during that time -- well before "Mark Elf." Coupled with the titling of "The Queen of the Afternoon" (set, like "Mark Elf," at the very end of the new dark ages), it suggests that a new cycle of stories, "The Lords of the Afternoon," may have been related to the dark ages. Shortly before his death, Linebarger told his friend Arthur Burns he was planning a story cycle of that name; Burns conjectured that it would take place in the period of "Under Old Earth," and most timelines have shown the series taking place in that period.

The year given for "How the Dream Lords Died," naturally knocks the time-line used in The Best of Cordwainer Smith and The Instrumentality of Mankind into a cocked hat. The dark ages must have lasted much longer than listed there, and the rest of the future history thus must have been compressed into a much shorter time. We will probably never know much more about Linebarger's intentions; even his wife doesn't seem to have been privy to them. In "The Saga of the Third Sister," a (deservedly) unpublished sequel to "The Queen of the Afternoon," she involved Karla vom Acht in the quest of the Robot, the Rat, and the Copt, even though that story was obviously intended to have come millennia later. In working on Paul's unfinished manuscript for "The Queen of the Afternoon" itself, she insisted on anachronistic references to underpeople, and softened the characterizations of Juli vom Acht and the true men. Incidentally, it isn't clear from Paul's original material whether Juli's arrival on Earth was actually to have come after Carlotta's, rather than before.

But enough of the history behind the history. You already know the story of the Instrumentality is more than history: it is poetry, and romance, and myth, and unlike any other SF series or future history. It is almost impossible to imagine anyone except Linebarger writing stories set in the universe of Cordwainer Smith, as others have written stories about Isaac Asimov's robots or Larry Niven's kzinti. It would probably be close to blasphemy, in the realm of the arts, for anyone else to even try. Like the rarest vintage wine, the work of dordwainer Smith cannot be duplicated. We must be grateful that we can still savor the true vintage of these pages.

No, No, Not Rogov!

That golden shape on the golden steps shook and fluttered like a bird gone mad -- like a bird imbued with an intellect and a soul, and, nevertheless, driven mad by ecstasies and terrors beyond human understanding -- ecstasies drawn momentarily down into reality by the consunirnation of superlative art. A thousand worlds watched.

Had the ancient calendar continued this would have been A.D. 13,582. After defeat, after disappointment, after ruin and reconstruction, mankind had leapt among the stars.

Out of meeting inhuman art, out of confronting non-human dances, mankind had made a superb esthetic effort and had leapt upon the stage of all the worlds.

The golden steps reeled before the eyes. Some eyes had retinas. Some had crystalline cones. Yet all eyes were fixed upon the golden shape which interpreted The Glory and Affirmation of Man in the Inter-World Dance Festival of what might have been A.D. 13,582.

Once again mankind was winning the contest. Music and dance were

hypnotic beyond the limits of systems, compelling, shocking to human and inhuman eyes. The dance was a triumph of shock -- the shock of dynamic beauty.

The golden shape on the golden steps executed shimmering intricacies of meaning. The body was gold and still human. The body was a woman, but more than a woman. On the golden steps, in the golden light, she trembled and fluttered like a bird gone mad.

I

The Ministry of State Security had been positively shocked when they found that a Nazi agent, more heroic than prudent, had almost reached N. Rogov.

Rogov was worth more to the Soviet armed forces than any two air armies, more than three motorized divisions~ His brain was a weapon, a weapon for the Soviet power.

Since the brain was a weapon, Rogov was a prisoner. He didn't mind. Rogov was a pure Russian type, broad-faced, sandy-haired, blue-eyed, with whimsey in his smile and amusement in the wrinkles of the tops of his cheeks.

"Of course I'm a prisoner," Rogov used to say. "I am a prisoner of State service to the Soviet peoples. But the workers and peasants are good to me. I am an academician of the All Union Academy of Sciences, a blur general in the Red Air Force, a professor in the University of Kharkov, a deputy works manager of the Red Flag Combat Aircraft Production Trust. From each of these I draw a salary."

Sometimes he would narrow his eyes at his Russian scientific colleagues and ask them in dead earnest, "Would I serve capitalists?"

The aflrighted colleagues would try to stammer their way out of the embarrassment, protesting their common loyalty to Stalin or Beria, or Zhukov, or Molotov, or Bulganin, as the case may have been.

Rogov would look very Russian: calm, mocking, amused. He would let them stammer.

Then he'd laugh. Solemnity transformed into hilarity, he would explode into bubbling, effervescent, good-humored laughter. "Of course I could not serve the capitalists. My little Anastasia would not let me."

The colleagues would smile uncomfortably and would wish that Rogov did not talk so 'vi Idly, or so comically, or so freely.

Even Rogov might wind up dead. Rogov didn't think so. They did. Rogov was afraid of nothing.

Most of his colleagues were afraid of each other, of the Soviet system, of the world, of life, and of death.

Perhaps Rogov had once been ordinary and mortal like other people, and full of fears.

But he had become the lover, the colleague, the husband of Anastasia Fyodorovna Cherpa's.

Comrade Cherpas had been his rival, his antagonist, his competitor, in the struggle for scientific eminence in the daring Slav frontiers of Russian science. Russian science could never overtake. the inhuman perfection of German method, the rigid intellectual and moral discipline of German teamwork, hut the Russians could and did get ahead of the Germans by giving vent to their bold, fantastic imaginations. Rogov had pioneered the first rocket launchers of 1939. Cherpas had finished the job by making the liest of the rockets radio-directed.

Rogov in 1942 had developed a whole new system of photo-mapping. Comrade Cherpas had applied it to color film. Rogov, sandy-haired, blue-eyed, and smiling, had recorded his criticisms of Comrade Cherpas's naivete and unsoundness at the top-secret meetings of Russian scientists during the black winter nights of 1943. Comrade Cherpas, her butter-yellow hair flowing down like living water to her shoulders, her unpainted face gleaming with fanaticism, intelligence, and dedication, would snarl her own

defiance at him, deriding his Communist theory, pinching at his pride, hitting his intellectual hypotheses where they were weakest.

By 1944 a Rogov-Cherpas quarrel had become something worth traveling to see.

In 1945 they were married.

Their courtship was secret, their wedding a surprise, their partnership a miracle in the upper ranks of Russian science.

The emigre press had reported that the great scientist, Peter Kapitza, once remarked, "Rogov and Cherpas, there is a team. They're Communists, good Communists; but they're better than that! They're Russian, Russian enough to beat the world. Look at them. That's the future, our Russian future!" Perhaps the quotation was an exaggeration, but it did show the enormous respect in which both Rogov and Cherpas were held by their colleagues in Soviet science.

Shortly after their marriage strange things happened to them.

Rogov remained happy. Cherpas was radiant.

Nevertheless, the two of them began to have haunted expressions, as though they had seen things which words could not express, as though they had stumbled upon secrets too important to be whispered even to the most secure agents of the Soviet State Police.

In 1947 Rogov had an interview with Stalin. As he left Stalin's office in the Kremlin, the great leader himself came to the door, his forehead wrinkled in thought, nodding, "Da, da, da."

Even his own personal staff did not know why Stalin was saying "Yes, yes, yes," but they did see the orders that went forth marked ONLY BY SAFE HAND, and TO BE READ AND RETURNED, NOT RETAINED, and furthermore stamped FOR AUTHORIZED EYES ONLY AND UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES TO BE COPIED.

Into the true and secret Soviet budget that year by the direct personal order of a noncommittal Stalin, an item was added for "Project Telescope." Stalin tolerated no inquiry, brooked no comment.

A village which had had a name became nameless.

A forest which had been opened to the workers and peasants became military territory.

Into the central post office in Kharkov there went a new box number for the village of Ya. Ch.

Rogov and Cherpas, comrades and lovers, scientists both and Russians both, disappeared from the everyday lives of their colleagues. Their faces were no longer seen at scientific meetings. Only rarely did they emerge.

On the few times they were seen, usually going to and from Moscow at the time the All Union budget was made up each year, they seemed smiling and happy. But they did not make jokes.

What the outside world did not know was that Stalin in giving them their own project, granting them a paradise restricted to themselves, had seen to it that a snake went with them in the paradise. The snake this time was. out one, but two personalities -- Gausgofer and Gauck.

II

Stalin died.

Beria died too -- less willingly.

The world went on.

Everything went into the forgotten village of Ya. Ch. and nothing came out.

It was rumored that Bulganin himself visited Rogov and Cherpas. It was even whispered that Bulganin said as he went to the Kharkov airport to fly back to Moscow, "It's big, big, big. There'll be no cold war if they do it. There won't be any war of any kind. We'll finish capitalism before the capitalists can ever begin to fight. If they do it. If they do it." Bulganin was reported to have shaken his head slowly in perplexity and to have said nothing more but to have put his initials on the unmodified budget of Project Telescope when a trusted messenger next brought him an envelope from

Rogov.

Anastasia Cherpas became a mother. Their first boy looked like his father. He was followed by a little girl. Then another little boy. The children didn't stop Cherpas's work. They had a large dacha and trained nurseinaids took over the household.

Every night the four of them dined together.

Rogov, Russian, humorous, courageous, amused.

Cherpas, older, more mature, more beautiful than ever but just as biting, just as cheerful, just as sharp as she had ever been.

But then the other two, the two who sat with them across the years of dIl their days, the two colleagues who had been visited upon them by the ill-powerful word of Stalin himself.

Gausgofer was a female: bloodless, narrow-faced, with a voice like a horse's whinny. She was a scientist and a policewoman, and competent at both jobs. In 1917 she had reported her own mother's whereabouts to the Bolshevik Terror Committee. In 1924 she had commanded her father's cxcution. He had been a Russian Gerinan of the old Baltic nobility and he had tried to adjust his mind to the new system, but he had failed. In 1930 she had let her lover trust her a little too much. He had been a Roumanian Communist, very high in the Party, but he had whispered into her ear in the privacy of their bedroom, whispered with the tears pouring down his face; she had listened affectionately and quietly and had delivered his words to the police the next morning.

With that she had come to Stalin's attention.

Stalin had been tough. He had addressed her brutally. "Comrade, you have some brains. I can see you know what Communism is all about. You understand loyalty. You're going to get ahead and serve the Party and the working class, but is that all you wantT' He had spat the question at her.

She had been so astonished that she gaped.

The old man had changed his expression, favoring her with leering benevolence. He had put his forefinger on her chest. "Study science, Comrade. Study science. Communism plus science equals victory. You're too clever to stay in police work."

Gausgofer took a reluctant pride in the fiendish program of her German namesake, the wicked old geographer who made geography itself a terrible weapon in the Nazi anti-Soviet struggle.

Gausgofer would have liked nothing better than to intrude on the marriage of Cherpas and Rogov.

Gausgofer fell in love with Rogov the moment she saw him.

Gausgofer fell in hate -- and hate can be as spontaneous and miraculous as love -- with Cherpas the moment she saw her.

But Stalin had guessed that too.

With the bloodless, fanatic Gausgofer he had sent a man named B. Gauck.

Gauck was solid, impassive, blank-faced. In body he was about the same height as Rogov. Where Rogov was muscular, Gauck was flabby. Where Rogov's skin was fair and shot through with the pink and health of exercise, Gauck's skin was like stale lard, greasy, gray-green, sickly even on the best of days.

Gauck's eyes were black and small. His glance was as cold and sharp as death. Gauck had no friends, no enemies, no beliefs, no enthusiasm. Even Gausgofer was afraid of him.

Gauck never drank, never went out, never received mail, never sent mail, never spoke a spontaneous word. He was never rude, never kind, never friendly, never really withdrawn: he couldn't withdraw any more than the constant withdrawal of all his life.

Rogov had turned to his wife in the secrecy of their bedroom soon after Gausgofer and Gauck came and had said, "Anastasia, is that man sane?"

Cherpas intertwined the fingers of her beautiful, expressive hands. She who had been tbe wit of a thousand scientific meetings was now at a loss for words. She looked up at her husband with a troubled expression. "I don't

know, comrade... I just don't know..."

Rogov smiled his amused Slavic smile. "At the least then I don't think Glausgofer knows either."

Cherpas snorted with laughter and picked up her hairbrush. "That she dloesn't. She really doesn't know, does she? I'll wager she doesn't even know to whom he reports."

That conversation had receded into the past. Gauck, Gausgofer, the bloodless eyes and the black eyes-they remained.

Every dinner the four sat down together.

Every morning the four met in the laboratory.

Rogov's great courage, high sanity, and keen humor kept the work going.

Cherpas's tiashing genius fueled him whenever the routine overloaded his magnificent intellect.

Gausgofer spied and watched and smiled her bloodless smiles; sometimes, curiously enough, Gausgofer made genuinely constructive suggestimis. She never understood the whole frame of reference of their work, but she knew enough of the mechanical and engineering details to be very useful on occasion.

Glauck came in, sat down quietly, said nothing, did nothing. He did not even snioke. He never fidgeted. He never went to sleep. He just watched.

This laboratory grew and with it there grew the immense configuration of the espionage machine.

III

In theory what Rogov had proposed and Cherpas seconded was imaginable. It consisted of an attempt to work out an integrated theory for all the electrical and radiation phenomena accompanying consciousness, and to duplicate the electrical functions of mind without the use of animal material.

The range of potential products was immense. The first product Stalin had asked for was a receiver, if possible, capable of tuning in the thoughts (if a human mind and of translating those thoughts into either a punch-tape machine, an adapted German Hellschreiber machine, or phonetic speech. If the grids could be turned around and the brain-equivalent machine could serve not as a receiver but as a transmitter, it might be able to send out stunning forces which would paralyze or kill the process of thought.

At its best, Rogov's machine would be designed to confuse human thought over great distances, to select human targets to be confused, and to Inlintain an electronic jamming system which would jam straight into the bum,in mind without the requirement of tubes or receivers.

He had succeeded -- in part. He had given himself a violent headache in the first year of work.

In the third year he had killed mice at a distance of ten kilometers. In the seventh year he had brought on mass hallucinations and a wave of suicides in a neighboring village. It was this which impressed Bulganin.

Rogov was now working on the receiver end. No one had ever explored the infinitely narrow, infinitely subtle bands of radiation which distinguished one human mind from another, but Rogov was trying, as it were, to tune in on minds far away.

He had tried to develop a telepathic helmet of some kind, but it did not work. He had then turned away from the reception of pure thought to the reception of visual and auditory images. Where the nerve ends reached the brain itself, he had managed over the years to distinguish whole pockets of micro-phenomena, and on some of these he had managed to get a fix.

With infinitely delicate tuning he had succeeded one day in picking up the eyesight of their second chauffeur and had managed, thanks to a needle thrust in just below his own right eyelid, to "see" through the other man's eyes as the other man, all unaware, washed their Zis limousine 1,600

meters away.

Cherpas had surpassed his feat later that winter and had managed to bring in an entire family having dinner over in a nearby city. She had invited B. Gauck to have a needle inserted into his cheekbone so that he could see with the eyes of an unsuspecting spied-on stranger. Gauck had refused any kind of needles, but Gausgofer had joined in the work.

The espionage machine was beginning to take form.

Two more steps remained. The first step consisted of tuning in on some remote target, such as the White House in Washington or the NATO Headquarters outside of Paris. The machine itself could obtain perfect intelligence by eavesdropping on the living minds of people far away.

The second problem consisted of finding a method of jamming those minds at a distance, stunning them so that the subject personnel fell into tears, confusion, or sheer insanity.

Rogov had tried, but he had never gotten more than thirty kilometers from the nameless village of Ya. Ch.

One November there had been seventy cases of hysteria, most of them ending in suicide, down in the city of Kharkov several hundred kilometers away, but Rogov was not sure that his own machine was doing it.

Comrade Gausgofer dared to stroke his sleeve. Her white lips smiled and her watery eyes grew happy as she said in her high, cruel voice, "You can do it, Comrade. You can do it."

Cherpas looked on with contempt. Gauck said nothing.

The female agent Glausgofer saw Cherpas's eyes upon her, and for a moment an arc of living hatred leapt between the two women.

The three of them went back to work on the machine.

Glauck sat on his stool and watched them.

The laboratory workers never talked very much and the room was quiet.

IV

It was the year in which Eristratov died that the machine made a breakthrough. Eristratov died after the Soviet and People's democracies had tried to end the cold war with the Americans.

It was May. Outside the laboratory the squirrels ran among the trees. The leftovers from the night's rain dripped on the ground and kept the earth moist. It was comfortable to leave a few windows open and to let the smell of the forest into the workshop.

The smell of their oil-burning heaters and the stale smell of insulation, of ozone, and of the heated electronic gear was something with which all of them were much too familiar.

Rogov had found that his eyesight was beginning to suffer because he had to get the receiver needle somewhere near his optic nerve in order to obtain visual impressions from the machine. After months of experimentation with both animal and human subjects he had decided to copy one of their last experiments, successfully performed on a prisoner boy fifteen years of age by having the needle slipped directly through the skull, up and behind the eye. Rogov had disliked using prisoners, because Gauck, speaking on behalf of security, always insisted that a prisoner used in experiments had to be destroyed in not less than five days from the beginning of the experiment. Rogov had satisfied himself that the skull-and-needle technique was safe, but he was very tired of trying to get frightened, unscientific people to carry the load of intense, scientific attentiveness required by the machine.

Rogov recapitulated the situation to his wife and to their two strange colleagues.

Somewjat ill-humored, he shouted at Gauck, "Have you ever known what this is all about? You've been here years. Do you know what we're trying to do? Don't you ever want to take part in the experiments yourself? Do you realize how many years of mathematics have gone into the making of these grids and the calculation of these wave patterns? Are you good for

anything?"

Gauck said, tonelessly and without anger, "Comrade Professor, I am obeying orders. You are obeying orders, too. I've never impeded you."

Rogov almost raved. "I know you never got in my way. We're all good servants of the Soviet State. It's not a question of loyalty. It's a question of enthusiasm. Don't you ever want to glimpse the science we're making? We are a hundred years or a thousand years ahead of the capitalist Americans. Doesn't that excite you? Aren't you a human being? Why don't you take part? Will you understand me when I explain it?"

Gauck said nothing: he looked at Rogov with his beady eyes. His dirty-gray face did not change expression. Gausgofer exhaled loudly in a grotesquely feminine sigh of relief, but she too said nothing. Cherpas, her winning smile and her friendly eyes looking at her husband and two colleagues, said, "Go ahead, Nikolai. The comrade can follow if he wants to."

Gausgofer looked enviously at Cherpas. She seemed inclined to keep quiet, but then had to speak. She said, "Do go ahead, Comrade Professor."

Said Rogov, "Kharosho, I'll do what I can. The machine is now ready to receive minds over immense distances." He wrinkled his lip in amused scorn. "We may even spy into the brain of the chief rascal himself and find out what Eisenhower is planning to do today against the Soviet people. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our machine could stun him and leave him sitting addled at his desk?"

Gauck commented, "Don't try it. Not without orders."

Rogov ignored the interruption and went on. "First I receive. I don't know what I will get, who I will get, or where they will be. All I know is that this machine will reach out across all the minds of men and beasts now living and it will bring the eyes and ears of a single mind directly into mine. With the new needle going directly into the brain it will be possible for me to get a very sharp fixation of position. The trouble with that boy last week was that even though we knew he was seeing something outside of this room, he appeared to be getting sounds in a foreign language and did not know enough English or German to realize where or what the machine had taken him to see."

Cherpas laughed. "I'm not worried. I saw then it was safe. You go first, my husband. If our comrades don't mind --?"

Gauck nodded.

Gausgofer lifted her bony hand breathlessly up to her skinny throat and said, "Of course, Comrade Rogov, of course. You did all the work. You must be the first."

Rogov sat down.

A white-smocked technician brought the machine over to him. It was mounted on three rubber-tired wheels and it resembled the small X-ray units used by dentists. In place of the cone at the head of the X-ray machine there was a long, incredibly tough needle. It had been made for them by the best surgical-steel craftsmen in Prague.

Another technician came up with a shaving bowl, a brush, and a straight razor. Under the gaze of Gauck's deadly eyes he shaved an area four centimeters square on the top of Rogov's head.

Cherpas herself then took over. She set her husband's head in the clamp and used a micrometer to get the skull fittings so tight and so clear that the needle would push through the dura mater at exactly the right point.

All this work she did deftly with kind, very strong fingers. She was gentle, but she was firm. She was his wife, but she was also his fellow scientist and his fellow colleague in the Soviet State.

She stepped back and looked at her work. She gave him one of their own very special smiles, the secret gay smiles which they usually exchanged with each other only when they were alone. "You won't want to do this every day. We're going to have to find some way of getting into the brain without using this needle. But it won't hurt you."

"Does it matter if it does hurt?" said Rogov. "This is the triumph of all our work. Bring it down."

Gausgofer looked as though she would like to be invited to take part in the experiment, but she dared not interrupt Cherpas. Cherpas, her eyes gleaming with attention, reached over and pulled down the handle, which brought the tough needle to within a tenth of a millimeter of the right place.

Rogov spoke very carefully. "All I felt was a little sting. You can turn the power on now."

Gausgofer could not contain herself. Timidly she addressed Cherpas. "May I turn on the power?"

Cherpas nodded. Gauck watched. Rogov waited. Gausgofer pulled down the bayonet switch.

The power went on.

With an impatient twist of her hand, Anastasia Cherpas ordered the laboratory attendants to the other end of the room. Two or three of them had stopped working and were staring at Rogov, staring like dull sheep. They looked embarrassed and then they huddled in a white-smocked herd at the other end of the laboratory.

The wet May wind blew in on all of them. The scent of forest and leaves was about them.

The three watebed Rogov.

Rogov's complexion began to change. His face became flushed. His breathing was so loud and heavy they could hear it several meters away. Cherpas fell on her knees in front of him, eyebrows lifted in mute inquiry.

Rogov did not dare nod, not with a needle in his brain. He said through flushed lips, speaking thickly and heavily, "Do -- not -- stop -- now."

Rogov himself did not know what was happening. He thought he might see an American room, or a Russian room, or a tropical colony. He might see palm trees, or forests, or desks. He might see guns or buildings, wash-rooms or beds, hospitals, homes, churches. He might see with the eyes of a child, a woman, a man, a soldier, a philosopher, a slave, a worker, a savage, a religious one, a Communist, a reactionary, a governor, a police-man. He might hear voices; he might hear English, or French, or Russian, Swahili, Hindu, Malay, Chinese, Ukrainian, Armenian, Turkish, Greek. He did not know.

Something strange was happening.

It seemed to him that he had left the world, that he had left time. The hours and the centuries shrank up as the meters and the machine, unchecked, reached out for the most powerful signal which any humankind had transmitted. Rogov did not know it, but the machine had conquered time.

The machine reached the dance, the human challenger, and the dance festival of the year that was not A.D. 13,582, but which might have been.

Before Rogov's eyes the golden shape and the golden steps shook and fluttered in a ritual a thousand times more compelling than hypnotism. The rhythms meant nothing and everything to him. This was Russia, this was Communism. This was his life -- indeed it was his soul acted out before his very eyes.

For a second, the last second of his ordinary life, he looked through flesh-and-blood eyes and saw the shabby woman whom he had once thought beautiful. He saw Anastasia Cherpas, and he did not care.

His vision concentrated once again on the dancing image, this woman, those postures, that dance!

Then the sound came in -- music which would have made a Tchaikovsky weep, orchestras which would have silenced Shostakovich or Khachaturian forever, so much did it surpass the music of the twentieth century.

The people-who-were-not-people between the stars had taught mankind many arts. Rogov's mind was the best of its time, but his time was far, far behind the time of the great dance. With that one vision Rogov went firmly and completely mad. He became blind to the sight of Cherpas, Gausgofer, and

Gauck. He forgot the village of Ya. Ch. He forgot himself. He was like a fish, bred in stale fresh water, which is thrown for the first time into a living stream. He was like an insect emerging from the chrysalis. His twentieth-century mind could not hold the imagery and the impact of the music and the dance.

But the needle was there and the needle transmitted into his mind more than his mind could stand.

The synapses of his brain flicked like switches. The future flooded into him.

He fainted. Cherpas leapt forward and lifted the needle. Rogov fell out of the chair.

V

It was Gauck who got the doctors. By nightfall they had Rogov resting comfortably and under heavy sedation. There were two doctors, both from the military headquarters. Gauck had obtained authorization for their services by dint of a direct telephone call to Moscow.

Both the doctors were annoyed. The senior one never stopped grumbling at Cherpas.

"You should not have done it, Comrade Cherpas. Comrade Rogov should not have done it either. You can't go around sticking things into brains. That's a medical problem. None of you people are doctors of medicine. It's all right for you to contrive devices with the prisoners, but you can't inflict things like this on Soviet scientific personnel. I'm going to get blamed because I can't bring Rogov back. You heard what he was saying. All he did was mutter, 'That golden shape on the golden steps, that music, that me is a true me, that golden shape, that golden shape, I want to be with that golden shape,' and rubbish like that. Maybe you've ruined a first-class brain forever --" He stopped himself short as though he had said too much. After all, the problem was a security problem and apparently both Gauck and Gausgofer represented the security agencies.

Gausgofer turned her watery eyes on the doctor and said in a low, even, unbelievably poisonous voice, "Could she have done it, Comrade Doctor?"

The doctor looked at Cherpas, answering Gausgofer. "How? You were there. I wasn't. How could she have done it? Why should she do it? You were there."

Cherpas said nothing. Her lips were compressed tight with grief. Her yellow hair gleamed, but her hair was all that remained, at that moment, of her beauty. She was frightened and she was getting ready to be sad. She had no time to hate foolish women or to worry about security; she was concerned with her colleague, her lover, her husband, Rogov.

There was nothing much for them to do except to wait. They went into large room and tried to eat.

The servants had laid out immense dishes of cold sliced meat, pots of caviar, and an assortment of sliced breads, pure butter genuine coffee, and liquors.

None of them ate much.

They were all waiting.

At 9:15 the sound of rotors beat against the house.

The big helicopter had arrived from Moscow.

Higher authorities took over.

VI

The higher authority was a deputy minister, a man by the name of V. Karper.

Karper was accompanied by two or three uniformed colonels, by an engineer civilian, by a man from the headquarters of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and by two doctors.

They dispensed with the courtesies. Karper merely said, "You are Cherpas. I have met you. You are Gausgofer. I have seen your reports. You are Gauck."

The delegation went into Rogov's bedroom. Karper snapped, "Wake him."

The military doctor who had given him sedatives said "Comrade, you mustn't --"

Karper cut him off. "Shut up." He turned to his own physician, pointed at Rogov. "Wake him up."

The doctor from Moscow talked briefly with the senior military doctor. He too began shaking his head. He gave Karper a disturbed look. Karper guessed what he might hear. He said, "Go ahead. I know there is some danger to the patient, but I've got to get back to Moscow with a report."

The two doctors worked over Rogov. One of them asked for his bag and gave Rogov an injection. Then all of them stood back from the bed.

Rogov writhed in his bed. He squirmed. His eyes opened, but he did not see them. With childishly clear and simple words Rogov began to talk:

that golden shape, the golden stairs, the music, take me back to the music, I want to be with the music, I really am the music..." and so on in an endless monotone.

Cherpas leaned over him so that her face was directly in his line of vision. "My darling! My darling, wake up. This is serious."

It was evident to all of them that Rogov did not hear her, because he went on muttering about golden shapes.

For the first time in many years Gauck took the initiative. He spoke directly to the man from Moscow, Karper. "Comrade, may I make a suggestion?"

Karper looked at him. Gauck nodded at Gausgofer. "We were both sent here by orders of Comrade Stalin. She is senior. She bears the responsibility. All I do is double-check."

The deputy minister turned to Gausgofer. Gausgofer had been staring at Rogov on the bed; her blue, watery eyes were tearless and her face was drawn into an expression of extreme tension.

Karper ignored that and said to her firmly, clearly, commandingly, "What do you recommend?"

Gausgofer looked at him very directly and said in a measured voice, "I do not think that the case is one of brain damage. I believe that he has obtained a communication which he must share with another human being and that unless one of us follows him there may be no answer."

Karper barked, "Very well. But what do we do?"

"Let me follow -- into the machine."

Anastasia Cherpas began to laugh slyly and frantically. She seized Karper's arm and pointed her finger at Gausgofer. Karper stared at her.

Cherpas slowed down her laughter and shouted at Karper, "The woman's mad. She has loved my husband for many years. She has hated my presence, and now she thinks that she can save him. She thinks that she can follow. She thinks that he wants to communicate with her. That's ridiculous. I will go myself!"

Karper looked about. He selected two of his staff and stepped over into a corner of the room. They could hear him talking, but they could not distinguish the words. After a conference of six or seven minutes he returned.

"You people have been making serious security charges against each other. I find that one of our finest weapons, the mind of Rogov, is damaged. Rogov's not just a man. He is a Soviet project." Scorn entered his voice. "I find that the senior security officer, a policewoman with a notable record, is charged by another Soviet scientist with a silly infatuation. I disregard such charges. The development of the Soviet State and the work of Soviet science cannot be impeded by personalities. Comrade Gausgofer will follow. I am acting tonight because my own staff physician says that Rogov may not live and it is very important for us to find out just what has happened to him and why."

He turned his baneful gaze on Cherpas. "You will not protest, Comrade. Your mind is the property of the Russian State. Your life and your education have been paid for by the workers. You cannot throw these things away because of personal sentiment. If there is anything to be found Comrade Gausgofer will find it for both of us."

The whole group of them went back into the laboratory. The frightened technicians were brought over from the barracks. The lights were turned on and the windows were closed. The May wind had become chilly.

The needle was sterilized.

The electronic grids were warmed up.

Gausgofer's face was an impassive mask of triumph as she sat in the receiving chair. She smiled at Gauck as an attendant brought the soap and the razor to shave a clean patch on her scalp.

Gauck did not smile back. His black eyes stared at her. He said nothing. He did nothing. He watched.

Karper walked to and fro, glancing from time to time at the hasty but orderly preparation of the experiment.

Anastasia Cherpas sat down at a laboratory table about five meters away from the group. She watched the back of Gausgofer's head as the needle was lowered. She buried her face in her hands. Some of the others thought they heard her weeping, but no one heeded Cherpas very much. They were too intent on watching Gausgofer.

Gausgofer's face became red. Perspiration poured down the flabby cheeks. Her fingers tightened on the arm of her chair.

Suddenly she shouted at them, "That golden shape on the golden steps."

She leapt to her feet, dragging the apparatus with her.

No one had expected this. The chair fell to the floor. The needle holder, lifted from the floor, swung its weight sidewise. The needle twisted like a scythe in Gausgofer's brain. Neither Rogov nor Cherpas had ever expected a struggle within the chair. They did not know that they were going to tune in on A.D. 13,582.

The body of Gausgofer lay on the floor, surrounded by excited officials.

Karper was acute enough to look around at Cherpas.

She stood up from the laboratory table and walked toward him. A thin line of blood flowed down from her cheekbone. Another line of blood dripped down from a position on her cheek, one and a half centimeters forward of the opening of her left ear.

With tremendous composure, her face as white as fresh snow, she smiled at him. "I eavesdropped."

Karper said, "What?"

"I eavesdropped, eavesdropped," repeated Anastasia Cherpas. "I found out where my husband has gone. It is not somewhere in this world. It is something hypnotic beyond all the limitations of our science. We have made a great gun, but the gun has fired upon us before we could fire it. You may think you will change my mind, Comrade Deputy Minister, but you will not.

"I know what has happened. My husband is never coming back. And I am not going any further forward without him.

"Project Telescope is finished. You may try to get someone else to finish it, but you will not."

Karper stared at her and then turned aside.

Gauck stood in his way.

"What do you want?" snapped Karper.

"To tell you," said Gauck very softly, "to tell you, Comrade Deputy Minister, that Rogov is gone as she says he is gone, that she is finished if she says she is finished, that all this is true. I know."

Karper glared at him. "How do you know?"

Gauck remained utterly impassive. With superhuman assurance and perfect calm he said to Karper, "Comrade, I do not dispute the matter. I

know these people, though I do not know their science. Rogov is done for."

At last Karper believed him. Karper sat down in a chair beside a table. He looked up at his staff. "Is it possible?"

No one answered.

"I ask you, is it possible?"

They all looked at Anastasia Cherpas, at her beautiful hair, her determined blue eyes, and the two thin lines of blood where she had eavesdropped with small needles.

Karper turned to her. "What do we do now?"

For an answer she dropped to her knees and began sobbing, "No, no, not Rogov! No, no, not Rogov!"

And that was all that they could get out of her. Gauck looked on.

On the golden steps in the golden light, a golden shape danced a dream beyond the limits of all imagination, danced and drew the music to herself until a sight of yearning, yearning which became a hope and a torment, went through the hearts of living things on a thousand worlds.

Edges of the golden scene faded raggedly and unevenly into black. The gold dimmed down to a pale gold-silver sheen and then to silver, last of all to white. The dancer who had been golden was now a forlorn white-pink figure standing, quiet and fatigued, on the immense white steps. The applause of a thousand worlds roared in upon her.

She looked blindly at them. The dance had overwhelmed her, too. Their applause could mean nothing. The dance was an end in itself. She would have to live, somehow, until she danced again.

War No. 81-Q (Rewritten Version)

For a few brief happy centuries, war was made into an enormous game.

Then the world population passed the thirty-billion point, Acting Chief Minister Chatterji presented the "Rightful Proportions" formula to the world authorities, and war turned from a game into realities. When it was over, hideous new creepers covered the wreckage of cities, saints and morons camped in the overpasses of disused highways, and a few man-hunting machines scoured the world in search of surviving weapons.

I

Long before real war set mankind back a thousand ages, the nations played with their formulae of "safe war." Wars were easily declared, safely fought, won or lost with noblesse oblige, and accepted as decisive. Wars were rare enough to sweep all other events from the television screens, beautiful enough to warrant the utmost in scenic decoration, and tough enough to call for champions with perfect eyesight and no nerves at all. The weapons were dirigibles armed with missiles, countermissiles, and feinting screens; they had been revived because they were slow enough to show well on the viewscreens, hard enough to demand a skillful fight. A whole class of warriors developed to manage these -- men who trained on the ski-slopes and underwater beaches of the world's resorts and who then, tanned and fit, sat in control rooms and managed the ships from their own home bases. The kinescopes were paired up so that pictures of the battle alternated with scenes of the warriors sitting in their controls, the foreheads wrinkled with worry, their gasps of dismay or smiles of triumph showing plainly, and the whole drama of human emotion revealed in their performance of a licensed war.

War came near between Tibet and America.

Tibet had been liberated from the Goonhogo, the central Chinese government, only with generous American help and with the threat (was it bluff? was it death?) trembling in the rocket pits around Lake Erie. No one ever found out whether the Americans would have risked real war, because the Chinese did not force a show of strength. The Americans had been supported

by the Reunion of India and the Federated Congos on the floor of the world assembly, and there were political debts to be settled when the Tibetan liberation came true. The Congo asked for support on Saharan claims, which was easy enough, since this was a matter of voting in the assembly, but the Reunion of India asked for the largest solar power-collector, to reach eighty miles along the southern crest of the Himalayas. The Americans hesitated, and then built it under lease from Tibet, keeping title in their own hands. Just before the first surges of power were due to pour down into the Bengal plains, Tibetan soldiers entered the control rooms with a warrant from the Tibetan ministry of the interior seizing the plant, Tibetan technicians hooked in new cables which had been flown from the Goonhogo base at Teli in Yunnan, and the Tibetans announced they had leased the entire power output to their recent enemies, the Goonhogo of China.

Even in politics, where gratitude is seldom expected, such bleak ingratitude was hard to bear. The Americans had just freed the Tibetans from the Chinese, and now the Tibetans seized the reward which America had built for Indian help on Tibetan territory. Legally, the deal was tight. The solar accumulators were on Tibetan soil, and under the system of "sovereignty" which prevailed at that time, any nation could do what it pleased on its own territory and get off scot-free.

Some Americans were so furious that they clamored for a real war against the Goonhogo of China. The president himself remarked mildly that it did not seem right to fight an antagonist merely because he showed himself cleverer than we.

Congress voted a licensed war.

The president had no further choice. He had to declare war on Tibet. He put a request for the permit in to the world secretariat. The license came back for "War No. 81-Q," since someone in the world secretariat figured that Tibet should not pay for any but the smallest-size war. The Americans had asked for a class-A war, which would have lasted up to four full days. The world secretariat refused a review of the case.

There was nothing left to do.

America was at war.

The president sent for Jack Reardon.

II

Reardon was the best licensed warrior America had.

"Morning, Jack," said the president. "You haven't fought for two years, when Iceland beat us. Do you feel up to it now?"

"Fitter than ever, sir," said Jack. He hesitated and then went on, "Please don't mention Iceland, sir. Nobody has ever beaten Sigurd Sigurdssen. Lucky for us that he's retired."

"I wouldn't have called you if I just meant to reproach you. I know you did the best that anyone could do short of the great Sigurd himself. That's why you're here. How do you think we should run it?"

"There's not much choice on ships, not with a class-Q war. They had better all five be the new Mark Zeros. Since we challenged, I think the Tibetans will choose the cheapest war they can. They don't want to run up a big bill on themselves. The Goonhogo would help them, but the Chinese would be around two days later, asking for payment."

"I didn't know," said the President with a gentle smile, "that you were also an expert on international affairs."

Reardon looked uncomfortable. "Sorry, sir," he muttered.

"That's all right," said the president. "I had it figured the same way. They will take the Kerguelen islands then?"

"Probably," said Reardon, "and our picture people are going to be furious. But the French keep those islands cheap. It's the only way they can hold it in the market as a war zone."

The president's manner changed completely. Instead of being a civilized old gentleman who had recently had his breakfast, he acted like

the shrewd, selfish politician who had beaten all his competitors for the job and who had then found that his country needed a president much more than he had ever needed a presidency. He looked Reardon in the face, staring sharply and deeply into his eyes, and then asked, in a formal, solemn tone:

"Jack, this maybe the biggest question of your life. How do you want to fight it?"

Reardon stiffened. "I thought it would be out of place to make up a list of team mates, sir. I thought perhaps you would have a list --"

"I don't mean that at all," said the president. "Do you prefer to fight it alone?"

"Alone, sir?"

"Don't play modest with me, Reardon," said the president. "You're the best man we have. As a matter of fact, you're the only first-class man we have. There are some youngsters coming up, but there aren't any more in your class --"

Reardon forgot himself, so technical was the subject, and interrupted the president: "Boggs is good, sir. He's had six fights as a mercenary in these little African wars."

"Reardon," said the president, "you interrupted me."

"I beg your pardon, sir," stammered Reardon.

"Boggs has nothing to do with it. I've seen him too, you know. Even if I add him, that only makes two pilots who are first-class."

Reardon looked straight at the president, his face begging for permission to speak.

The president smiled faintly: "Okay, what is it?"

"How about filling in the team with mercenaries, sir?"

"Mercenaries!" shouted the president. "Good lord, no! That would be the worst possible thing we could do. We'd look like fools all over the world. I played with real war to get Tibet free, and the Goonhogo of China gave in just because some of the people in the Goonhogo thought that Americans were still tough. Hire one mercenary and it's all gone. We have the posttlre of America to preserve. Will you or won't you?"

Reardon looked genuinely puzzled, "Will I what, sir?"

"You fool," said the president, "can you fight the war alone or can't you? You know the rules."

Reardon knew them. For using a single pilot, the nation obtained a tremendous advantage. Two enemy ships down and his nation won, no ijiatter how many ships he himself lost. There hadn't been a one-pilot war since the great Sigurd Sigurdssen defeated Federated Europe, Morocco, Japan, and Brazil in one-two-three-four order, thirty-two years ago. After that no one bad challenged Iceland to a class-Q war. Iceland went on declaring licensed wars on the slightest provocation; the leelanders had accumulated enough credit to fight a hundred wars. The challenged powers all chose the largest, most complicated wars they could, trying to swamp Sigurd in a maze of teamwork.

Reardon stared out of the window. The president let him think. At last he spoke, and his voice was heavy with conviction,

"I can try it, sir. They've given us the chance by demanding a elass-Q war. But I'm no Sigurd and you know it, sir."

"I know it, Reardon," said the president seriously, "but perhaps none of us -- not even you yourself -- know what your very best performance can be. Will you do it, Reardon, for the country, for me, for yourself?"

Reardon nodded. Fame and victory looked very bleak to him at that moment.

III

The formalities came through with no trouble.

Tibet and America both claimed the Himalayan Escarpment Solar Banks. They agreed that the title should yield through war.

The Universal War Board granted a war permit, subject to strict and

clear conditions:

1. The war was to be fought only at the times and places specified.
2. No human being was to be killed or injured, directly or indirectly, by any performance of the machines of war. Emotional injury was not to be considered.
3. An appropriate territory was to be leased and cleared. Provisions should be made for the maximum removal of wildlife, particularly birds, which might be hurt by the battle.
4. The weapons were to be winged dirigibles with a maximum weight of 22,000 tons, propelled by non-nuclear engines.
5. All radio channels were to be strictly monitored by the U.W.B. and by both parties. At any complaint of jamming or interference the war was to be brought to a halt.
6. Each dirigible should have six non-explosive missiles and thirty non-explosive countermissiles.
7. The U.W.B. was to intercept and to destroy all stray missiles and real weapons before the missiles left the war zone, and each party, regardless of the outcome of the war, was to pay the U.W.B. directly for the interception and destruction of stray missiles.
8. No living human beings were to be allowed on the ships, in the war zone, or on the communications equipment which relayed the war to the world's televisions. (The last remembered casualties of "safe war" had been video crews who had ridden their multicopter into the blazing guns of a combat dirigible before the pilot, thousands of miles away, could see them and stop his guns.)
9. The "stipulated territory" was to be the War Territory of Kerguelen, to be leased by both parties from the Fourteenth French Republic, as agent for Federated Europe, at the price of four million gold livres the hour.
10. Seating for the war, apart from video rights belonging to the combatants, should remain the sole property of the lessor of the War Territory of Kerguelen.

With these arrangements, the French off-lifted their sheep from the island ranges of Kerguelen -- the weary sheep were getting thoroughly used to being lifted from their grazing land to Antarctic lighters every time a war occurred -- and the scene was ready.

Reardon planned to work from Omaha; he supposed that his Tibetan counterparts would be stationed in Lhasa, but since Tibet had not been an independent power for many generations, he wondered what mercenaries they might obtain. They might get Sung from Peking; he had six battles more than Reardon and was a dependable fighter.

IV

The French sold out their seats and view-spots around Kerguelen very easily. The usual smugglers sold telescopes which would allegedly give perfect non-copyright views of the war and, as usual, most of them did not work; the purchasers merely had a cruise out of Durban, Madras, or Perth in vain.

The warships were ready. The American ones were gold in color, stubby wings sticking out from the sides of their cigar-shaped bodies, the ancient American eagle surrounded by red, white and blue circles on their sides. The five Tibetan ships turned out to be old Chinese Goonhogo models on rental. The emblem of China had been painted out and the prayer-wheel of Tibet shone fresh with new paint. The Chinese mechanics were expert to the point of trickiness; the American member of the umpire team insisted on inspection of all ten ships before he signed for the entry into the War Territory of Kerguelen.

The minute of opening was noon, local time. Reardon started with a real advantage. Positions had been chosen at random by the umpires and he was facing into a strong west wind, while the enemy ships had to hold back

lest they be blown out of the territory.

Some fool in a swivel chair had named the American airships for characters out of Shakespeare, so that Reardon found himself managing the Prospero, the Ariel, the Oberon, the Caliban, and the Titania. The Tibetans had not taken the time to re-name the Chinese ships, which had the titles of old dynasties: the Han, the Yuan, the Ch'ing, the Chin, and the Ming.

Reardon kept his ships lined up close to the spectators, so that the Tibetans could not fire missiles at him without shooting out of the Territory and being penalized. He glanced up at the board in Omaha to see his antagonists, who had come on the telescreen. Sung was there, all right; so, too, was Baartek, a famous mercenary who flew under the flag of Liechtenstein and looked for quarrels wherever he could find them. The other three were strangers. One of them, wearing Tibetan clothes, was a girl. "That's a good Chinese propaganda trick," thought Reardon. "Trust the Goonhogo never to miss a bet!"

The Chinese got the displeasure of the spectators by casting a smoke screen. There really wasn't much else they could do, with their dirigibles pumping awkwardly in reverse against the wind. When the smoke screen neared his ships, Reardon jumped. He put the Prospero on manual, made three wild guesses, and sprang.

The Prospero came ruined out of the other side of the smoke wall. Two missiles had pierced her and Reardon doubted that the salvage crew would get much of her by the time the war ended.

But he had almost won the war. He had rammed both the Han and the Ming. He used the eyes of the Ariel to watch them. The crippled Ming fought for position over the cold, cold waters of the deep South Indian Ocean. Reardon suspected that Baartek had taken over. She fired suddenly; he twisted the Ariel. Sheets of flame behind his ship told him that the U.W.B. had intercepted the missiles with live weapons, to keep them from harming the massed spectators. The flashes went on for so long that his viewscreens shone with a quivering, milky white. There were going to be a lot of headaches among those spectators who watched those interception flashes too long, thought he. Baartek obviously did not care what his Tibetan employers paid in penalty money. Yet the Ariel had gotten away so easily!

The Han, meanwhile, though falling, had attacked the Caliban, which lost its left wing and began drifting downward. Reardon shot a reproachful glance at the robot who had been managing the ship for him, and decided not to take time to curse the robot programmers who had guessed events so poorly.

The face and voice of the U.W.B. umpire appeared on all screens. "The Caliban, American. The Han, Tibetan. Take both of them off the field. Suspend fire and remove."

Under the scoring system, Reardon had just lost the winning of the war. All he needed to do was to down two enemy ships and keep one of his own in the air for the period of the war, and he had won. But the Ming, now on the whitecaps and breaking up, was the first of his victories; the Han was to have been the other. Now he had to start over again.

He put the Ariel on robot and took over the Titania himself.

One of the enemy ships began creeping toward him along the line of the spectators. It could not fire at him, because the Territory was rectangular and the Titania was too close to a corner. He could not fire at it unless he got the Titania down with her belly almost in the water; then his stray shots would escape into space.

He and the enemy started their dive at the same time.

His command screen blanked out. The face of the president appeared on the screen. Only the president had that kind of overriding priority.

"How's it going, my boy? Doesn't look too good, does it?"

Reardon wanted to scream, "Get off, you fool!"

But it was the president; one does not scream at presidents. He forced himself to speak politely, though he knew his face had gone white with rage. "Please, sir, get off the screen. It's all right, sir. Thank

you."

The president got off the screen and Reardon found himself back on the Titania just as the enemy cut her in two.

In a wile rage, but a controlled rage, he took over the Ariel, letting the ruined Titania go to the waves below.

He spat a smoke screen himself, and it rushed toward him. He rose to the top of it just in time to see two Chinese ships go looking for him. He dived back in. The smoke was thinning. He struck for the lever which fired a time-on-target, all missiles reaching for the same instant. But he thought of that fool of a president and he struck the wrong lever: DESTRICT.

The Ariel blew up in a pretty show of fireworks. There were two other or orange clouds near her. The video eye on the foredeck of the Ariel showed him that he had technically won the war. The other two ships went down with him.

He switched to the Oberon, his last remaining ship. There were still two Chincse to his one. They were the Ch'ing and the Yuan.

The umpire came on, "You hit 'destruct.' That is not allowed as a weapon in a licensed war."

"It was an error," snapped Reardon. "You can look at your tape of me. You can see that I was reaching for 'time-on-target'."

There was a moment of silence while the blank screens buzzed. Then the umpire came back on, speaking to Baartek and Sung but letting Reardon listen in. "The rules don't really cover this," said the umpire. "It was a mistake, but your ships were taking a chance in getting that close to him. He was coming after you from the top. I rule it a net gain."

Now all he had to do was to stay alive for the next sixty-seven minutes -- alive meaning with a ship in the field.

He began creeping along the line of the spectators, so close that some of them backed up. Many voices called for the umpire, but Reardon made sure that he had his hundred meters' tolerance.

The Ch'ing and the Yuan both lined upon him. He had to use emergency jets to dip in order to escape their missiles. He thought that the Ch'ing had two left and the Yuan three, but the battle had gone so fast, with so much in smoke, that he could not be absolutely sure. It was like some of the old card games: sometimes even the best players lost command of a complete recollection of the cards.

He dived again.

The Chinese ships followed.

A missile clipped the elevator vane of his right wing.

Reardon took advantage of it. He turned the Oberon sideways, like a crippled ship, and let it drop toward the water.

The Yuan followed for a look and he gave it to her. He cut a hole in her that he could see daylight through. She drifted toward the spectators, out of control. There was a bright flash from the protective weapons of the U.W.B. and she was gone.

The Oberon touched water and as she touched, Reardon rammed the engines into full reverse. He fired two of his precious missiles directly into the water itself. An enormous cloud of steam arose and the Oberon rose faster than an airship had ever risen before. He could not see where he was going, because his video was still looking at the waves and he was rising in reverse, but he watched his damage-control screen and he set his audio on HIGH.

The impact came.

The Oberon crunched into something that could only be the Ch'ing.

Reardon increased the thrust, cutting his ship in a sharp turn, still in reverse. He fired backwards into the ship he had rammed and pushed it inexorably back toward the water. The two ships, in collision, had not yet burst into flame.

Damage control suddenly lit up like a Christmas tree. The whole back of his ship was gone.

Using his fingertips and stroking the controls as lightly as he possibly could, he called for ASCEND. All he could see was the open sky above and the spectator craft, looking odd since they seemed to sit sidewise in the air, on the left of his pattern. The Oberon came loose from something.

He had sunk the Ch'ing without ever seeing it.

The umpire came on the board. "Your ship's clear of the water. The other one is out. War is over, sixty-one minutes ahead of time. Victory is declared for America. Tibet has lost."

In a different tone, the umpire said, "Congratulations, my boy. The enemy pilots wish to congratulate you, too. May they?"

V

Before Reardon could say yes or no, his screen blanked out.

The president had used his priority again.

Reardon saw with amusement that the old gentleman was weeping.

"You've done it, lad, you've done it. I always knew you would."

Reardon forced his face into a smile of approval and sat waiting for the screen to show him the faces of his friendly enemies. Baartek was sure to insist on a dinner; he always did.

Mark Elf

The years rolled by; the Earth lived on, even when a stricken and haunted mankind crept through the glorious ruins of an immense past.

I. Descent of a Lady

Stars wheeled silently over a, : early summer sky, even though men had long ago forgotten to call such nights by the name of iune.

Laird tried to watch the stars with his eyes closed. It was a ticklish and terrifying game for a telepath: at any moment he might feel the heavens opening up and might, as his mind touched the image of the nearer stars, plunge himself into a nightmare of perpetual falling. Whenever he had this sickening, shocking, ghastly, suffocating feeling of limitless fall, he had to close his mind against telepathy long enough to let his powers heal.

He was reaching with his mind for objects just above the Earth, burnt-out space stations which flitted in their multiplex orbits, spinning forever, left over from the wreckage of ancient atomic wars.

He found one.

Found one so ancient it had no surviving cryotronic controls. Its design was archaic beyond belief; chemical tubes had apparently once lifted it out of Earth's atmosphere.

He opened his eyes and promptly lost it.

Closing his eyes he groped again with his seeking mind until he found the ancient derelict. As his mind reached for it again the muscles of his jaw tightened. He sensed life within it, life as old as the archaic machine itself.

In an instant, he made contact with his friend Tong Computer.

He poured his knowledge in to Tong's mind. Keenly interested, Tong shot back at him an orbit which would cut the mildly parabolic pattern of the old device and bring it back down into Earth's atmosphere.

Laird made a supreme effort.

Calling on his unseen friends to aid him, he searched once more through the rubbish that raced and twinkled unseen just above the sky. Finding the ancient machine, he managed to give it a push.

In this fashion, about sixteen thousand years after she left Hitler's Reich, Carlotta vom Acht began her return to the Earth of men.

In all those years, she had not changed.

Earth had.

The ancient rocket tipped. Four hours later it had begun to graze the stratosphere, and its ancient controls, preserved by cold and time against all change, went back into effect. As they thawed, they became activated.

The course flattened out.

Fifteen hours later, the rocket was seeking a destination.

Electronic controls which had really been dead for thousands of years, out in the changeless time of space itself, began to look for German territory, seeking the territory by feedbacks which selected characteristic Nazi patterns of electronic communications scramblers.

There were none.

How could the machine know this? The machine had left the town of Pardubice, on April 2, 1945, just as the last German hideouts were being mopped up by the Red Army. How could the machine know that there was no Hitler, no Reich, no Europe, no America, no nations? The machine was keyed to German codes. Only German codes.

This did not affect the feedback mechanisms.

They looked for German codes anyway. There were none. The electronic computer in the rocket began to go mildly neurotic. It chattered to itself like an angry monkey, rested, chattered again, and then headed the rocket for something which seemed to be vaguely electrical. The rocket descended and the girl awoke.

She knew she was in the box in which her daddy had placed her. She knew that she was not a cowardly swine like the Nazis whom her father despised. She was a good Prussian girl of noble military family. She had been ordered to stay in the box by her father. What daddy told her to do she had always done. That was the first kind of rule for her kind of girl, a sixteen-year-old of the Junker class. The noise increased.

The electronic chattering flared up into a wild medley of clicks.

She could smell something perfectly dreadful burning, something awful and rotten like flesh. She was afraid that it was herself, but she felt no pain.

"Vadi, Vadi, what is happening to me?" she cried to her father.

(Her father had been dead sixteen thousand and more years. Obviously enough, he did not answer.)

The rocket began to spin. The ancient leather harness holding her broke loose. Even though her section of the rocket was no bigger than a coffin, she was cruelly bruised.

She began to cry.

She vomited, even though very little came up. Then she slid in her own vomit and felt nasty and ashamed because of something which was a terribly simple human reaction.

The noises all met in a screaming, shrieking climax. The last thing she remembered was the firing of the forward decelerators. The metal had become fatigued so that the tubes not only fired forward; they blew themselves to pieces sidewise as well.

She was unconscious when the rocket crashed. Perhaps that saved her life, since the least muscular tension would have led to the ripping of muscle and the crack of bone.

II. A Moron Found Her

His metals and plumes beamed in the moonlight as he scampered about the dark forest in his gorgeous uniform. The government of the world had long since been left to the Morons by the True Men, who had no interest in such things as politics or administration.

Carlotta's weight, not her conscious will, had tripped the escape handle. Her body lay half in, half out of the rocket.

She had gotten a bad burn on her left arm where her skin touched the hot outer surface of the rocket.

The Moron parted the bushes and approached.

"I am the Lord High Administrator of Area Seventy-three," he said, identifying himself according to the rules.

The unconscious girl did not answer. He rose up close to the rocket, crouching low lest the dangers of the night devour him, and listened intently to the radiation counter built in under the skin of his skull behind his left ear. He lifted the girl dextrously, flung her gently over his shoulder, turned about, ran back into the bushes, made a right-angle turn, ran a few paces, looked about him undecidedly, and then ran (still uncertain, still rabbit-like) down to the brook.

He reached into his pocket and found a burn-balm. He applied a thick coating to the burn on her arm. It would stay, killing the pain and protecting the skin, until the burn was healed.

He splashed cool water on her face. She awakened.

"Wo bin ich?" said she in German.

On the other side of the world, Laird, the telepath, had forgotten for the moment about the rocket. He might have understood her, but he was not there. The forest was around her and the forest was full of life, fear, hate, and pitiless destruction.

The Moron babbled in his own language.

She looked at him and thought that he was a Russian.

Said she in German, "Are you a Russian? Are you a German? Are you part of General Vlasov's army? How far are we from Prague? You must treat me courteously. I am an important girl..."

The Moron stared at her.

His face began to grin with innocent and consummate lust. (The True Men had never felt it necessary to inhibit the breeding habits of Morons. It was hard for any kind of human being to stay alive between the Beasts, the Unforgiven, and the Menschenjagers. The True Men wanted the Morons to go on breeding, to carry reports, to gather up a few necessities, and to distract the other inhabitants of the world enough to let the True Men have the quiet and contemplation which their exalted but weary temperaments demanded.)

This Moron was typical of his kind. To him food meant eat, water meant drink, woman meant lust.

He did not discriminate.

Weary, confused, and bruised though she was, Carlotta still recognized his expression.

Sixteen thousand years ago she had expected to be raped or murdered by the Russians. This soldier was a fantastic little man, plump and grinning, with enough medals for a Soviet colonel general. From what she could see in the moonlight, he was clean-shaven and pleasant, but he looked innocent and stupid to be so high-ranking an officer. Perhaps the Russians were all like that, she thought.

He reached for her.

Tired as she was, she slapped him.

The Moron was mixed up in his thoughts. He knew that he had the right to capture any Moron woman whom he might find. Yet he also knew that it was worse than death to touch any woman of the True Men. Which was this -- this thing -- this power -- this entity who had descended from the stars?

Pity is as old and emotional as lust. As his lust receded, his elemental human pity took over. He reached in his jerkin pocket for a few scraps of food.

He held them out to her.

She ate, looking at him trustfully, very much the child.

Suddenly there was a crashing in the woods.

Carlotta wondered what had happened.

When she first saw him, his face had been full of concern. Then he had grinned and had talked. Later he had become lustful. Finally he had acted very much the gentleman. Now he looked blank, brain and bone and skin all concentrated into the act of listening -- listening for something else, beyond the crashing, which she could not hear. He turned back to her.

"You must run. You must run. Get up and run. I tell you, run!" She listened to his babble without comprehension.

Once again he crouched to listen.

He looked at her with blank horror on his face. Carlotta tried to understand what was the matter, but she could not riddle his meaning.

Three more strange little men dressed exactly like him came crashing out of the woods.

They ran like elk or deer before a forest fire. Their faces were blank with the exertion of running. Their eyes looked straight ahead so that they seemed almost blind. It was a wonder that they evaded the trees. They came crashing down the slope, scattering leaves as they ran. They splashed the waters of the brook as they stomped recklessly through it. With a half-animal cry Carlotta's Moron joined them.

The last she saw of him, he was running away into the woods, his plumes grinning ridiculously as his head nodded with the exertion of running.

From the direction from which the Morons had come, an unearthly creepy sound whistled through the woods. It was whistling, stealthy and low, accompanied by the very quiet sound of machinery.

The noise sounded like all the tanks in the world compressed into the living ghost of a tank, into the heart of a machine which survived its own destruction and, spiritlike, haunted the scenes of old battles.

As the sound approached Carlotta turned toward it. She tried to stand up could not. She faced the danger. (All Prussian girls, destined to be the mothers of officers, were taught to face danger and never to turn their backs on it.) As the noise came close to her she could hear the high crazy inquiry of soft electronic chatter. It resembled the sonar she had once heard in her father's laboratory at the Reich's secret off ice's project Nordnacht.

The machine came out of the woods. And it did look like a ghost.

III. The Death of All Men

Carlotta stared at the machine. It had legs like a grasshopper, a body like a ten-foot turtle, and three heads which moved restlessly in the moonlight.

From the forward edge of the top shell a hidden arm leapt forth, seeming to strike at her, deadlier than a cobra, quicker than a jaguar, more silent than a bat flitting across the face of the moon.

"Don't!" Carlotta screamed in German. The arm slopped suddenly in he moonlight.

The stop was so sudden that the metal twanged like the string of a bow.

The heads of the machine all turned toward her.

Something like surprise seemed to overtake the machine. The whisling dropped down to a soothing purr. The electronic chatter burst up to a crescendo and then stopped. The machine dropped to its knees.

Carlotta crawled over to it.

Said she in German, "What are you?"

"I am the death of all men who oppose the Sixth German Reich," saul the machine in fluted singsong German. "If the Reichsangehöriger wishes to identify me, my model and number are written on my carapace."

The machine knelt at a height so low that Carlotta could seize one of the heads and look in the moonlight at the edge of the top shell. The head and neck, though made of metal, felt much more weak and brittle than she expected. There was about the machine an air of immense age.

"I can't see," wailed Carlotta. "I need a light."

There was the ache and grind of long-unused machinery. Another tueclianical arm appeared, dropping flakes of near-crystallized dirt as it moved. The tip of the arm exuded light, blue, penetrating, and strange.

Brook, forest, small valley, machine, even herself, were all lit up by the soft penetrating blue light which did not hurt her eyes. The light even gave her a sense of well-being. With the light she could read. Traced on the carapace just above the three heads was this inscription:

WAFFENAMT DES SECHSTEN DEUTSCHEN REICHES
BURG EISENHOWER, A.D. 2495

And then below it in much larger Latin letters:

MENSCHENJAGER MARK ELF

"What does 'Man-hunter, Model Eleven' mean?"

"That's me," whistled the machine. "How is it you don't know me if you're a German?"

"Of course, I'm a German, you fool!" said Carlotta. "Do I look like a Russian?"

"What is a Russian?" said the machine.

Carlotta stood in the blue light wondering, dreaming, dreading -- dreading the unknown which had materialized around her.

When her father, Heinz Horst Ritter vom Acht, professor and doctor of mathematical physics at project Nordnacht, had fired her into the sky before he himself awaited a gruesome death at the hands of the Soviet soldiery, he had told her nothing about the Sixth Reich, nothing about what she might meet, nothing about the future. It came to her mind that perhaps the world was dead, that the strange little men were not near Prague, that she was in Heaven or Hell, herself being dead, or if herself alive, was in some other world, or her own world in the future, or things beyond all human ken, or problems which no mind could solve.

She fainted again.

The Menschenjager could not know that she was unconscious and addressed her in serious high-pitched singsong German. "German citizen, have confidence that I will protect you. I am built to identify German thoughts and to kill all men who do not have true German thoughts."

The machine hesitated. A loud chatter of electronic clicks echoed across the silent woods while the machine tried to compute its own mind. It was not easy to select from the long-unused store of words for so ancient and so new a situation. The machine stood in its own blue light. The only sound was the sound of the brook moving irresistibly about its gentle and unliving business. Even the birds in the trees and the insects round about were hushed into silence by the presence of the dreaded whistling machine.

To the sound-receptors of the Menschenjager, the running of the Morons, by now some two miles distant, came as a very faint pitter-patter.

The machine was torn between two duties, the long-current and familiar duty of killing all men who were not German, and the ancient and forgotten duty of succoring all Germans, whoever they might be. After another period of electronic chatter, the machine began to speak again. Beneath the grind of its singsong German there was a curious warning, a reminder of the whistle which it made as it moved, a sound of immense mechanical and electronic effort.

Said the machine, "You are German. It has been long since there has been any German anywhere. I have gone around the world two thousand three hundred and twenty-eight times. I have killed seventeen thousand four hundred and sixty-nine enemies of the Sixth German Reich for sure, and I have probably killed forty-two thousand and seven additional ones. I have been back to the automatic restoration center eleven times. The enemies who call themselves the True Men always elude me. One of them I have not killed for more than three thousand years. The ordinary men whom some call the Unforgiven are the ones I kill most of all, but frequently I catch Morons and kill them, too. I am fighting for Germany, but I cannot find Geonany anywhere. There are no Germans in Germany. There are no Germans anywhere. I

accept orders from no one but a German. Yet there have been no Germans anywhere, no Germans anywhere, no Germans anywhere..."

The machine seemed to get a catch in its electronic brain because it went on repeating no Germans anywhere three or four hundred times.

Carlotta came to as the machine was dreamily talking to itself, repeating with sad and lunatic intensity, no Germans anywhere.

Said she, "I'm a German."

"...no Germans anywhere, no Germans anywhere, except you, except you, except you."

The mechanical voice ended in a thin screech. Carlotta tried to come to her feet.

At last the machine found words again. "What-do-I-do-now?"

"Help me," said Carlotta firmly.

This command seemed to tap an operable feedback in the ancient cybernetic assembly. "I cannot help you, member of the Sixth German Reich. For that you need a rescue machine. I am not a rescue machine. I also a hunter of men, designed to kill all the enemies of the German Reich."

"Get me a rescue machine then," said Carlotta.

The blue light went off, leaving Carlotta standing blinded in the dark. She was shaky on her legs. The voice of the Menschenjager came to her.

"I am not a rescue machine. There are no rescue machines. There are no rescue machines anywhere. There is no Germany anywhere. There are no Germans anywhere, no Germans anywhere, no Germans anywhere, except you. You must ask a rescue machine. Now I go. I must kill men. Men who are enemies of the Sixth German Reich. That is all I can do. I must fight forever. I shall find a man and kill him. Then I shall find another man and kill him. I depart on the work of the Sixth German Reich."

The whistling and clicking resumed.

With incredible daintiness, the machine stepped as lightly as a cat across the brook. Carlotta listened intently in the darkness. Even the dry caves of last year did not stir as the Menschenjager moved through the shadow of the fresh leafy trees.

Abruptly there was silence.

Carlotta could hear the agonized clickety-clack of the computers in the Menschenjager. The forest became a weird silhouette as the blue light went back on.

The machine returned.

Standing on the far side of the brook, it spoke to her in the dry, high-fluted singing German voice.

"Now that I have found a German I will report to you once every hundred years. That is correct. Perhaps that is correct. I do not know. I was built to report to officers. You are not an officer. Nevertheless you are a German. So I will report every hundred years. Meanwhile, watch out for the Kaskaskia Effect."

Carlotta, sitting again, was chewing some of the dry cubic food scraps which the Moron had left behind. They tasted like a mockery of chocolate. With her mouth full, she tried to shout to the Menschenjager, "Was ist das?"

Apparently the machine understood, because it answered, "The Kaskaskia Effect is an American weapon. The Americans are all gone. There are no Americans anywhere, no Americans anywhere, no Americans anywhere --"

"Stop repeating yourself," said Carlotta. "What is that effect you are talking about?"

"The Kaskaskia Effect stops the Menschenjagers, stops the True Men, stops the Beasts. It can be sensed, but it cannot be seen or measured. It moves like a cloud. Only simple men with clean thoughts and happy lives can live inside it. Birds and ordinary beasts can live inside it, too. The Kaskaskia Effect moves about like clouds. There are more than twenty-one and less than thirty-four Kaskaskia Effects moving slowly about this planet Earth. I have carried other Menschenjagers back for restoration and rebuilding, but the restoration center can find no fault. The Kaskaskia

Effect ruins us. Therefore, we run away... even though the officers told us to run from nothing. If we did not run away, we would cease to exist. You are a German. I think the Kaskaskia Effect would kill you. Now I go to hunt a man. When I find him I will kill him."

The blue light went off.

The machine whistled and clicked its way into the dark silence of the wooded night.

IV. Conversation with the Middle-Sized Bear

Carlotta was completely adult.

She had left the screaming uproar of Hitler Germany as it fell to ruins in its Bohemian outposts. She had obeyed her father, the Ritter vom Acht, as he passed her and her sisters into missiles which had been designed as personnel and supply carriers for the First German National Socialist Moon Base.

He and his medical brother, Professor Doctor Joachim von Acht, had harnessed the girls securly in their missiles.

Their uncle the Doctor had given them shots.

Karla had gone first, then Juli, and then Carlotta.

Then the barbed-wire fortress of Pardubice and the monotonous grind of Wehrmacht trucks trying to escape the air strikes of the Red Air Force and the American fighter-bombers died in the one night, and this mysterious "forest in the middle of nothing-at-all" was born in the next night.

Carloita was completely dazed.

She found a smooth-looking place at the edge of the brook. The old leaves werc heaped high here. Without regard for further danger, she slept.

She had not been asleep more than a few minutes before the bushes parted again.

This time it was a bear. The bear stood at the edge of the darkness and looked into the moonlit valley with the brook running through it. He could hear no sound of Morons, no whistle of manshonyagger, as he and his kind called the hunting machines. When he was sure all was safe, he twitched his claws and reached delicately into a leather bag which was hanging from his neck by a thong. Gently he took out a pair of spectacles and fitted them slowly and carefully in front of his tired old eyes.

He then sat down next to the girl and waited for her to wake up.

She did not wake until dawn.

Sunlight and birdsong awakened her.

(Could it have been the probing of Laird's mind, whose far-reaching senses told him that a woman had magically and mystenously emerged from the archaic rocket and that there was a human being unlike all the other kinds of mankind waking at a brookside in a place which had once been called Maryland?)

Carlotta awoke, but she was sick.

She had a fever.

Her back ached.

Her eyelids were almost stuck together with foam. The world had had time to develop all sorts of new allergenic substances since she had last walked on the surface of the Earth. Four civilizations had come and vanished. They and their weapons were sure to leave membrane-inflaming residue behind.

Her skin itched.

Her stomach felt upset.

Her arm was numb and covered with some kind of sticky black. She did not know it was a burn covered by the salve which the Moron had given her the previous night.

Her clothes were dry and seemed to be falling off her in shreds.

She felt so bad that when she noticed the bear, she did not even have strength to run.

She just closed her eyes again.

Lying there with her eyes closed she wondered all over again where she was.

Said the bear in perfect German, "You are at the edge of the Unselfing Zone. You have been rescued by a Moron. You have stopped a Menschenjager very mysteriously. For the first time in my own life I can see into a German mind and see that the word manshonyagger should really be Menschenjager, a hunter of men. Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Middle-Sized Bear who lives in these woods."

The voice not only spoke German, but it spoke exactly the right kind of German. The voice sounded like the German which Carlotta had heard throughout her life from her father. It was a masculine voice, confident, serious, reassuring. With her eyes still closed she realized that it was a bear who was doing the talking. With a start, she recalled that the bear had been wearing spectacles.

Said she, sitting up, "What do you want?"

"Nothing," said the bear mildly.

They looked at each other for a while.

Then said Carlotta, "Who are you? Where did you learn German? What's going to happen to me?"

"Does the Fraulein," asked the bear, "wish me to answer the questions in order?"

"Don't be silly," said Carlotta. "I don't care what order. Anyhow, I'm hungry. Do you have anything I could eat?"

The bear responded gently, "You wouldn't like hunting for insect grubs. I have learned German by reading your mind. Bears like me are friends of the True Men and we are good telepaths. The Morons are afraid of us, but we are afraid of the manshonyaggers. Anyhow, you don't have to worry very much because your husband is coming soon."

Carloita had been walking down toward the brook to get a drink. His last words stopped her in her tracks.

"My husband?" she gasped.

"So probably that it is certain. There is a True Man named Laird who has brought you down. He already knows what you are thinking, and I can see his pleasure in finding a human being who is wild and strange, but not really wild and not really strange. At this moment he is thinking that you may have left the centuries to bring the gift of vitality back among man-kind. He is thinking that you and he will have wonderful children. Now he is telling me not to tell you what I think he thinks, for fear that you will run away." The bear chuckled.

Carlotta stood, her mouth agape.

"You may sit in my chair," said the Middle-Sized Bear, "or you can wait here until Laird comes to get you. Either way you will be taken care of. Your sickness will heal. Your ailments will go away. You will be hippy again. I know this because I am one of the wisest of all known bears."

Carlotta was angry, confused, frightened, and sick again. She started to run.

Something as solid as a blow hit her.

She knew without being told that it was the bear's mind reaching out and encompassing hers.

It hit -- boom -- and that was all.

She had never before stopped to think of how comfortable a bear's mind was. It was like lying in a great big bed and having mother take care of one when one was a very little girl, glad to be petted and sure of getting well.

The anger poured out of her. The fear left her. The sickness began to lighten. The morning seemed beautiful.

She herself felt beautiful as she turned-

Out of the blue sky, dropping swiftly but gracefully, came the figure of a bronze young man. A happy thought pulsed against her mind. That is Laird, my beloved. He is coming. He is coming. I shall be happy forever after.

It was Laird. And so she was.
The Queen of the Afternoon

Above all, as size began to awaken, size wished for her family. She called to them, "Mutti, Vati, Carlotta, Karla! Where are you?" But of course size cried it in German since she was a good Prussian girl. Then she remembered.

How long had it been since her father had put her and her two sisters into the space capsules? She had no idea. Even her father, the Ritter vom Acht, and her uncle, Professor Doctor Joachim vom Acht -- who had administered the shots in Parbudice, Germany, on April 2, 1945 -- could not have imagined that the girls would remain in suspended animation for thousands of years. But so it was.

Afternoon sunlight gleamed orange and gold on the rich purple shades of the Fighting Trees. Charis looked at the trees, knowing that as the sunset moved from orange to red and as darkness crept over the eastern horizon, they would once again glow with quiet fire.

How long was it since the trees were planted -- Fighting Trees, the True Men called them -- for the express purpose of sending their immense roots down into the earth, seeking out the radioactives in the soil and the waters beneath, concentrating the poisonous wastes into their hard pods, then dropping the waxy pods until, at some later time, the waters which came from above the earth, and those yet in the earth, would once more be clean? Charls did not know.

One thing he did know. To touch one of the trees, to touch it directly, was certain death.

He wanted very much to break a twig but he did not dare. Not only was it tambu, but he feared the sickness. His people had made much progress in the last few generations, enough so that at times they did not fear to face True Men and to argue with them. But the sickness was not something with which one could argue.

At the thought of a True Man, an unaccountable thickness gripped him in the throat. He felt sentimental, tender, fearful; the yearning that gripped him was a kind of love, and yet he knew that it could not be love since he had never seen a True Man except at a distance.

Why, Charls wondered, was he thinking so much about True Men? Was there, perhaps, one nearby?

He looked at the setting sun, which was by now red enough to be looked at safely. Something in the atmosphere was making him uneasy. He called to his sister.

"Oda, Oda!"

He did not answer.

Again he called. "Oda, Oda!"

This time he heard her coming, plowing recklessly through the underbrush. He hoped she would remember to avoid the Fighting Trees. Oda was sometimes too impatient.

Suddenly there she was before him.

"You called me, Charls? You called me? You've found something? Shall we go somewhere together? What do you want? Where are mother and father?"

Charls could not help laughing. Oda was always like that.

"One question at a time, little sister. Weren't you afraid you would die the burning death, going through the trees like that? I know you don't want to believe in the tambu, but the sickness is real."

"It isn't," she said. She shook her head. "Maybe it was once... I guess it really was once" -- granting him a concession -- "but do you, yourself, know of anybody who has died from the trees for a thousand years?"

"Of course not, silly. I haven't been alive a thousand years."

Oda's impatience returned. "You know what I mean. And anyway, I decided the whole thing is silly. We all accidentally brush against the trees. So one day I ate a pod. And nothing happened."

He was appalled. "You ale a pod?"

"That's what I said. And nothing happened."

"Oda, one of these days you're going to go too far."

She smiled at him. "And now I suppose you are going to say that the oceans' beds were not always filled with grass."

He was indignant. "No. of course I know better than that. I know that the grass was put into the oceans for the same reason that the Fighting Trees were planted -- to eat up all the poisons tha the Old Ones left in the days of the Ancient Wars."

How long they would have bickered he did not know, but just then his ears caught an unfamiliar noise. He knew the sound the True Men made as they sped on their mysterious errands in the upper air. He knew the ominous buzz that the Cities gave off should he approach them too closely. He knew also the clicking noises that the few remaining manshonyaggers made as they crept through the Wild, alert for any non-German to kill. Poor blind machines, they were so easy to outsmart.

But this noise, this noise was different. It was nothing he had ever heard before.

The whistling sound rose and throbbled against the upper reaches of his hearing. It had a curiously spiral quality about it as though it approached and receded, all the while veering toward him. Charis was filled with terror, feeling threatened beyond all understanding.

Now Oda heard it too. Their quarrel forgotten, she seized his arm.

"What is it, Charls? What could it be?"

His voice was hesitant and full of wonder. "I don't know."

"Are the True Men doing something, something new that we never heard before? Do they want to hurt us, or enslave us? Do they want to catch us? Do we want to be caught? Charls, tell me, do we want to be caught? Could it be the True Men coming? I seem to smell True Man. They did come once before and caught some of us and took them away and did strange things to them, so that they looked like True Men, didn't they, Charls? Could it be the True Men again?"

In spite of his fear, Charls had a certain amount of impatience with Oda. She talked so much.

The noise persisted and intensified. Charls sensed that it was directly over his head, but he could see nothing.

Oda said, "Charls, I think I see it. Do you see it, Charls?"

Suddenly he too saw the circle -- a dim whiteness, a vapor train that increased in size and volume. Concomitantly the sound increased, until he felt his eardrums would burst. It was nothing ever before seen in his world....

A thought struck him. It was as hard as a physical blow; it sapped his courage and manhood as nothing before had ever done; he did not feel young and strong any more. He could hardly frame his words.

"Oda, could that be --"

"Be what?"

"Could it be one of the old, old weapons from the Ancient Past? Could it be coming back to destroy us all, as the legends have always foretold? People have always said they would come back..." His voice trailed off.

Whatever the danger, he knew that he was completely helpless, helpless to protect himself helpless to protect Oda.

Against the ancient weapons there was no defense. This place was no safer than that place, that place no better than this. People still had to live their lives under the threat of weapons from long, long ago. This was the first time that he personally had met the threat, but he had heard of it. He reached for Oda's hand.

Oda, singularly courageous now that there was real danger, drew him over onto the bank, away from the cenote. With half his mind he wondered why she seemed to want to move away from the water. She tugged at his arm. and he sat down beside her.

Already, he knew, it was too late to go looking for their parents or others of their pack. Sometimes it took a whole day to round up the entire family -- the thing was coming down relentlessly, and Charls felt so drained of energy that he stopped talking. He thought at her: Let's just wait it out here, and she squeezed his hand as she thought back: Yes, my brother.

The long box in the circle of light continued to descend, inexorable.

It was odd. Charls could feel a human presence, but the mind was strangely closed to him. He felt a quality of mind that he had never felt before. He had read the minds of True Men as they flew far overhead; he knew the minds of his own people; he could distinguish the thoughts of most of the birds and beasts; it was no trouble to detect the crude electronic hunger of the mechanical mind of a manshonyagger.

But this -- this being had a mind that was raw, elemental, hot. And closed.

Now the box was very near. Would it crash in this valley or the next? The screams from within it were extremely shrill. Charls's ears hurt and his eyes smarted from the intensity of heat and noise. Oda held his hand tightly.

The object crashed into the ground.

It ripped the hillside just across the cenote. Had Oda not instinctively moved away from the cenote, the box would have hit them, Charls realized.

Charls and Oda stood up cautiously.

Somehow the box must have decelerated: It was hot, but not hot enough to make the broken trees around it burst into flame. Steam rose from the crushed leaves.

The noise was gone.

Charls and Oda moved to within ten man-lengths of the object. Charls framed his clearest thought and flung it at the box: Who are you?

The being within obviously did not perceive him as he was. There came forth a wild thought, directed at living beings in general.

Fools, fools, help me! Get me out of here!

Oda caught the thought, as did Charls. She stepped in mentally and Charls was astonished at the clarity and force of her inquiry. It was simple but beautifully strong and hard. She thought the one idea:

How?

From the box there came again the frantic babble of demand: The handles, you fools. The handles on the outside. Take the handles and let me out!

Charls and Oda looked at each other. Charls was not sure that he really wanted to let this creature "out." Then he thought further. Maybe the unpleasantness that radiated from the box was simply the result of imprisonment. He knew that he himself would hate to be encased like that.

Together Charls and Oda risked the broken leaves, walking gingerly up to the box itself. It was black and old; it looked like something the elders called "iron" -- and never touched. They saw the handles, pitted and scarred.

With the ghost of a smile, Charls nodded to his sister. Each took a handle and lifted.

The sides of the box crackled. The iron was hot but not unbearably so. With a rusty shriek, the ancient door flew open.

They looked into the box.

There lay a young woman.

She had no fur, only long hair on her head.

Instead of fur, she had strange, soft objects on her body but as she sat up, these objects began to disintegrate.

At first the girl looked frightened; then, as she glanced at Oda and Charls, she began to laugh. Her thought came through, clearly and rather cruelly: I guess I don't have to worry about modesty in front of puppy dogs.

Oda did not seem to mind the thought but Charls's feelings were hurt. The girl said words with her mouth but they could not understand them. Each of them took an elbow and led her to the ground.

They reached the edge of the cenote and Oda gestured to the strange girl to sit down. She did, and made more words.

Oda was as puzzled as Charis, but then she began to smile. Spieking had worked before, when the girl was in the box. Why not now? The only thing was, this odd girl did not seem to know how to control her thoughts. Everything she thought was directed at the world at large -- at the valley, at the sunset sky, at the cenote. She did not seem to realize that she was shouting every thought aloud.

Oda put her question to the young woman: Who are you?
The hot, strange mind flung back quickly: Juli, of course.
At this point Charls intervened. There's no "of course" about it, he spieked.

What am I doing? the girl's thoughts ran. I'm in mental telepathy with puppy-dog people.

Embarrassed, Charls and Oda watched her as her thoughts splashed out.

"Doesn't she know how to close off her thoughts?" Charls wbndered. And why had her mind seemed so closed when she was in the box?

Puppy-dog people. Where can I be if I'm mixed up with puppy-dog people? Can this be Earth? Where have I been? How long have I been gone? Where is Germany? Where are Carlotta and Karla? Where are Daddy and Mother and Uncle Joachim? Puppy-dog people!

Charls and Oda felt the sharp edge of the mind that was so recklessly flinging all these thoughts. There was a kind of laughter that was cruel each time she thought puppy-dog people. They could feel that this mind was as bright as the brightest minds of the True Men -- but this mind was different. It did not have the singleness of devotion or the wary wisdom thit saturated the minds of the True Men.

Then CharIs remembered something. His parents had once told him of a mind that was something like this one.

Juli continued to pour out her thoughts like sparks from a fire, like raindrops fmm a big splash. Charls was frightened and did not know what to do; and Oda began to turn away from the strange girl.

Then Cliarls perceived it. Juli was frightened. She was calling them puppy-dog people to cover her fear. She really did not know where she was.

He mused, not directing his thought at Juli: Just because she's frightened it doesn't mean she has the right to think sharp, bright things at us.

Perhaps it was his posture that betrayed his attitude; Juli seemed to catch the thought.

Suddenly she burst into words again, words that they could not understand. It seemed as though she were begging, asking, pleading, expostuliting. She seemed to be calling for specific persons or things. Words poured forth, and these were names that the True Men used. Was it her parents? Her lover? Her siblings? It had to be someone she had known before entering that screaming hox, where she had been captive in the blue of the sky for... for how long?

Suddenly she was quiet. Her attention had shifted.

She pointed to the Fighting Trees.

The sunset had so darkened that the trees were beginning to light up. The soft fire was coming to life as it had during all the years of Charls's life and those of his forefathers.

As she pointed, Jul made words again. She kept repeating them. It sounded like v-a-s-i-s-d-a-s.

Charls could not help being a little irritated. Why doesn't she just think? It was odd that they could not read her mind when she was using the words.

Again, although Charls had not aimed the question at her, Juli seemed to catch it. From her there came a flame of thought, a single idea, that leapt like a fountain of fire from that tired little female head:

What is this world?

Then the thought shifted focus slightly. Vati, Vati, where am I? Where are you? What has become of me? There was something forlorn and desolate to it.

Oda put out a soft hand toward the girl. Juli looked at her and some of the harsh, fearful thoughts returned. Then the sheer compassion of Oda's posture seemed to catch Juli's attention, and with relaxation came complete collapse. The great and terrifying thought disappeared. Juli burst into tears. She put her long arms about Oda. Oda patted her back and Juli sobbed even harder.

Out of the sobbing came a funny, friendly thought, loving and no longer contemptuous: Dear little puppy dogs, dear little puppy dogs, please help me. You are supposed to be our best friends... do help me now....

Charls perked up his ears. Something -- or someone -- was coming over the top of the hill.

Certainly a thought as big and as sharp as Juli's could attract all living forms within kilometers. It might even catch the attention of the aloof but ominous True Men.

A moment later Charls relaxed. He recognized the stride of his parents. He turned to Oda.

"Hear that?"

She smiled. "It's father and mother. They must have heard that big thought the girl had."

Charls watched with pride as his parents approached. It was a well-justified pride. Bil and Kae both appeared, as they were, sensitive and intelligent. In addition, their fur was well-matched. Bil's beautiful caramel coat had spots of white and black only along his cheekbones and nose and at the tip of his tail; Kae was a uniform fawn-beige with which her beautiful green eyes made a striking contrast.

"Are you both all right?" Bil asked as they approached. "Who is that? She looks like a True Man. Is she friendly? Has she hurt you? Was she the one who was doing all that violent thinking? We could feel it clear across the hillside."

Oda burst into a giggle. "You ask as many questions as I do, Daddy."

Charls said, "All we know is that a box came from the sky and that she was in it. You heard that shrieking noise as it came down first, didn't you?"

Kae laughed. "Who didn't hear it?"

"The box hit right over there. You can see where it hurt the hillside."

The area where the box had landed was black and forbidding. Around it the fallen Fighting Trees gleamed in tangled confusion on the ground.

Bil looked at Jul and shook his head. "I don't see why she wasn't killed if she hit that hard."

Juli began to speak in words again, but at last she seemed to understand. Shouting her language would not help any. Instead, she thought: Please, dear little puppy dogs. Please help me. Please understand me.

Bil kept his dignity but he noticed with dismay that his tail was wagging of its own accord. He realized that the urge was uncontrollable. He felt both resentful and happy as he thought back at her: Of course we uiderstand you and we'll try to help you; but please don't think your thoughts so hard or so recklessly. They hurt our minds when they are so bright and sharp.

Jul tried to turn down the intensity of her thought. She pleaded: Take me to Germany.

The four Unauthorized Men -- mother, father, daughter, and son -- looked at each other. They had no idea of what a Germany might be.

It was Oda who turned to Juli, girl to girl, and spieked: Think some Germany at us so we can know what it is.

There came forth from the strange girl images of unbelievable beauty. Picture after clear picture emerged until the little family was almost blinded by the magnificence of the display. They saw the whole ancient world come to life. Cities stood bright in a green-encircled world. There were no aloof and languid True Men; instead, all the people they saw in Juli's mind resembled Juli herself. They were vital, sometimes fierce, forceful; they were tall, erect, long-fingered; and of course they did not have the tails of the Unauthorized Men. The children were pretty beyond belief.

The most amazing thing about this world was the tremendous number of people in it. The people were thicker than the birds of passage, more crowded than the salmon at running time.

Charls had thought himself a well-traveled young man. He had met at least four dozen other persons besides his own family, and he had seen True Men in the skies above him hundreds of times. He had often witnessed the intolerable brightness of Cities and had walked around them more than once until, each time, he had been firmly assured that there was no way for him to enter. He thought his valley a good one. In a few more years he would be old enough to visit the nearby valleys and to look for a wife for himself.

Put this vision that came from Juli's mind... he could not imagine how so many people could live together. How could they all greet each other in the mornings? How could they all agree on anything? How could they all ever become still enough to be aware of each other's presence, cich other's needs?

There came a particularly strong, bright image. Small-wheeled boxes were hurtling people at insensate speed up and down smooth, smooth roads.

"So that's what roads were for," he gasped to himself.

Among the people he saw many dogs. They were nothing like the creatares of Charls's world. They were not the long, otter-like animals whom the Unauthorized Men despised as lowly kindred; nor were they like the Unauthorized Men themselves, and they were certainly not like those modified animals who in appearance were almost indistinguishable from True Men. No, these dogs of Juli's world were bounding, happy creatures with few responsibilities. There seemed to be an affectionate relationship between them and the people there. They shared laughter and sorrow.

Juli had closed her eyes as she tried to bring Germany to them. Concentrating hard, now she brought into the picture of beauty and happiness something else-fearful flying things that dropped fire; thunder and noise; a most unpleasant face, a screaming face with a dab of black fur above the mouth; a licking of flame in the night; a thunder of death machines. Across this thunder there was the image of Juli and two other girls who resembled her; they were moving with a man, obviously their father, toward three iron boxes that looked like the one Juli had landed in. Then there was darkness.

That was Germany.

Juli slumped to the ground.

Gently the four of them probed at her mind. To them it was like a diamond, as clear and transparent as a sunlit pool in the forest, but the light it shot back to them was not a reflection. It was rich and bright and dazzling. Now that it was at rest, they could see deeply into it. They saw hunger, hurt, and loneliness. They saw a loneliness so great that each of them in turn tried to think of a way to assuage it. Love, they thought, what she needs is love, and her own kind. But where would they find an Ancient One? Would a True Man answer?

Bil said, "There's only one thing to do. We've got to take her to the house of the Wise Old Bear. He has communications with the True Men."

Oda cried out, "But she hasn't done anything wrong!"

Her father looked at her. "Darling, we don't know what this is. She's an Ancient One come back to this world after a sleep in space itself. It's been thousands of years since her world lived; I think she's beginning

to realize that, and that's what put her into shock. We need help. Our people may once have been dogs, and that's what she thinks we are. We can't let that bother us. But she needs a house, and the only unauthorized house that I know of belongs to the Wise Old Bear."

Charls looked at his parents. His eyes were troubled. "What is this business about dogs? Is that why we feel so mixed up when we think about True Men? I'm confused about her too. Do you suppose I really want to belong to her?"

"Not really," his father said. "That's just a feeling left over from long, loog ago. We lead our own lives now. But this girl, she's too big a probJem h)r us. We will take her to the Bear. At least he has a house."

juli was still unconscious, and to them she was so big. Each took a limb md with difficulty they managed to carry her. Within less than a tenth of a night they had reached the house of the Wise Old Bear. Fortunately they had not met any manshonyaggers or other dangers of the forest.

At the door of the house of the Wise Old Bear they gently laid the girl on the ground.

Bil shouted, "Bear, Bear, come out, come out!"

"Who is there?" a voice boomed from within.

"Bil and his family. We have an Ancient with us. Come out. We need your help."

The light that had been streaming from the doorway with a yellow glare was suddenly reduced to endurable proportions as the immense bulk of the Bear loomed in the doorway before them.

He pulled his spectacles from a case attached to his belt, put them on his nose, and squinted at Juli.

"Bless my soul," he said. "Another one. Where on earth did you get an ancient girl?"

Pompous but happy, Charls spoke up. "She came out of the sky in a screaming box."

The Bear nodded wisely.

Then Bil spoke up. "You said 'another one.' What did you mean?"

The Bear winced slightly. "Forget I said that," he told them. "I forgot for a moment that you are not True Men. Please forget it."

Bil said, "You mean it's something Unauthorized Men are not supposed to know about?"

The Bear nodded unhappily.

Understanding, Bil said, "Well, if you can ever tell us about it, will you, please?"

"Of course," the Bear replied. "And now I think I'd better call my housekeeper to take care of her. Herkie, Herkie, come here."

A blonde woman appeared, peering anxiously. Obviously there was something the matter with her blue eyes but she seemed to be functioning adequately.

Bil hacked away from the door. "That's an Experimental person," he said. "That's a cat!"

The Bear was completely uninterested. "So it is, but you can see that her eyes are imperfect. That's why she is allowed to be my housekeeper and why her name isn't prefaced by a C'."

Bil understood. The errors True Men made in trying to breed underpersons were often destroyed but occasionally one was allowed to live if it seemed able to function at some necessary task. The Bear had connections with True Men. If he needed a housekeeper, an imperfect modified animal provided an ideal solution.

Herkie bent over Juli's still form. She peered in puzzlement at Juli's face. Then she looked up at the Bear. "I don't understand," she said. "I don't see how it could be."

"Later," the Bear said. "When we are alone."

Herkie strained to see into the darkness and perceived the dog family. "Oh, I see," she said.

Bil and Charls were embarrassed. Oda and Kae did not seem to notice the slight.

Bil waved his hand. "Well, good-bye. I hope you can take care of her all right."

"Thank you for bringing her," the Bear said. "The True Men will probably give you a reward."

In spite of himself, Bil felt his tail beginning to wag again.

"Will we ever see her again?" Oda asked. "Do you think we'll ever see her again? I love her, I love her...."

"Perhaps," her father answered. "She will know who saved her, and I think she will seek us out."

Juli awoke slowly. Where am I? What is this place? She had a partial return of memory. The puppy-dog people. Where are they? She felt conscious of someone at her bedside. She looked up into clouded blue eyes staring anxiously into hers.

"I'm Herkie," the woman said. "I'm the Bear's housekeeper."

Juli felt as though she had awakened in a mental hospital. It was all so impossible. Puppy-dog people and now a bear? And surely the blonde woman with the bad cycs was not a human?

Herkie patted her hand. "Of course you're confused," she said.

Juli was taken aback. "You're talking! You're talking and I understand you. You're talking German. We're not just communicating telepathically."

"Of course," Herkie said. "I speak true Doych. It's one of the Bear's favorite languages."

"One of..." Juli broke off. "It's all so confusing."

Again Herkie patted her hand. "Of course it is."

Juli lay back and looked at the ceiling. I must be in some other world.

No, Herkie thought at her, but you've been gone a long time.

The Bear came into the room. "Feeling better?" lie asked.

Juli merely nodded.

"In the morning we will decide what to do," he said. "I have some connections with the True Men, and I think that we had best take you to the Vomact."

Juli sat up as if hit by a bolt of lightning. "What do you mean, 'the Vomacht'? That is my name, vom Acht!"

"I thought it might be," the Bear said. Herkie, peering at her from the bedside, nodded wisely.

"I was sure of it," she said. Then, "I think you need some good hot soup and a rcst. in the morning it will all straighten itself out."

The tiredness of years seemed to settle in Juli's bones. I do need to rest, she thought. I need to get things sorted out in my mind. So suddenly that she did not even have a chance to be startled by it, she was asleep.

Herkie and the Bear studied her face. "There's a remarkable resemblanee." the Bear said. Herkie nodded in agreement. "It's the time differeential I'm worried about. Do you think that will be important?"

"I don't know," Herkie replied. "Since I'm not human, I don't know what bothers people." She straightened and stretched to her full length. "I know!" she said. "I do know! She must have been sent here to help us with the rebellion!"

"No," the Bear said. "She has been too long in Time for her arrival to have been intentional. It is true that she may help us, she may very well help us. but I think that her arrival at this particular time and place is fortuitous rather than planned."

"Sometimes I think I understand a particular human mind," Herkie said, "hut I'm sure you're correct. I can hardly wait for them to meet each other!"

"Yes," he said, "although I'm afraid that it's going to be rather

traumatic. In more than one way."

When Juli awoke after her deep sleep, she found a thoughtful Herkie awaiting her.

Juli stretched and her mind, still uncontrolled, asked: Are you really a cat?

Yes, Herkie thought back at her. But you are going to have to discipline that thought process of yours. Everyone can read your thoughts.

I'm sorry, Juli spieked, but I'm just not used to all this telepathy.

"I know." Herkie had switched to German.

"I still don't understand how you know German," Juli said.

"It's rather a long story. I learned it from the Bear. I think, perhaps, you had better ask him how he learned it."

"Wait a minute. I'm beginning to remember what happened before I fell asleep. The Bear mentioned my name, my family name, vom Acht."

Herkie switched the subject. "We've made you some clothes. We tried to copy the style of those you had on, but they were coming to pieces so badly that we are not sure we got the new ones right."

She looked so anxious to please that Juli reassured her immediately. If they fit. I'm sure they'll be just fine.

Oh, they fit, Herkie spieked. We measured you. Now, after your bath and meal, you will dress and the Bear and I will take you to the City. Underpersons like me are not ordinarily allowed in the City, but this time I think that an exception will be made.

There was something sweet and wise in the face with the clouded blue eyes. Juli felt that Herkie was her friend. I am, Herkie spieked, and Juli was once more made aware that she must learn to control her thoughts, or at least the broadcasting of them.

You'll learn, Herkie spieked. It just takes some practice.

They approached the City on foot, the Bear leading the way, Juli behind him, and Ilerkie bringing up the rear. They encountered two manshonyaggers along the road but the Bear spoke true Doych to them from some distance and they turned silently and slunk away.

Juli was fascinated. "What are they?" she asked.

"Their real name is 'Menschenjager' and they were invented to kill people whose ideas did not accord with those of the Sixth German Reich. But there are very few of them still functional, and so many of us have learned Doych since... since..."

"Yes?"

"Since an event you'll find out about in the City. Now let's get on with it."

They neared the City wall and Juli became conscious of a buzzing sound, and of a powerful force that excluded them. Her hair stood on end and she felt a tingling sensation of mild electrical shock. Obviously there was a force field around the City.

"What is it?" she cried out.

"Just a static charge to keep back the Wild," the Bear said soothingly. "Don't worry, I have a damper for it."

He held up a small device in his right paw, pushed a button on it, and immediately a corridor opened before them.

When they reached the City wall, the Bear felt carefully along the upper ridge. At a certain point he paused, then reached for a strange-looking key that hung from a cord around his neck.

Juli could see no difference between this section of the wall and any other but the Bear inserted his key into a notch he had located and a section of the barrier swung up. The three passed through and silently the wall fell back into position.

The Bear hurried them along dusty streets. Juli saw a number of people but most of them seemed to her aloof, austere, uncaring. They bore little resemblance to the lusty Prussians she remembered.

Eventually they arrived at the door of a large building that looked old and imposing. Beside the door there was an inscription. The Bear was hurrying them through the entryway.

Oh, please, Mr. Bear, may I stop to read it?

Just plain Bear is all right. And yes, of course you may. It may even help you to understand some of the things that you are going to learn today.

The inscription was in German, and it was in the form of a poem. It looked as though it had been carved hundreds of years earlier (as indeed it had. Juli could not know that at this time).

Herkie looked up. "Oh, the first..."

"Hush," said the Bear.

Juli read the poem to herself silently.

Youth

Fading, fading, going

Flowing

Like life blood fro. our veins....

Little remains.

The glorious face

Erased,

Replaced

By one which mirrors tears,

The years

Gone by.

Oh, Youth,

Linger yet a while!

Smile

Still upon us

The wretched few

Who worship

You....

"I don't understand it," said Juli.

"You will," the Bear said. "Unfortunately, you will."

An official in a bright green robe trimmed with gold approached.

"We have not had the honor of your presence for some time," he said respectfully to the Bear.

"I've been rather busy," the Bear replied. "But how is she?"

Juli realized with a start that the conversation was not telepathic but was in German. How do all these people know German? She unthinkingly flung her thought abroad.

Hush came back the simultaneous warnings from Herkie and the Bear.

Juli felt thoroughly admonished. "I'm sorry," she almost whispered.

"I don't know how I'll ever learn the trick."

Herkie was immediately sympathetic. "It is a trick," she said, "but you're already better at it than you were when you arrived. You just have to be careful. You can't fling your thoughts everywhere."

"Never mind that now," the Bear said and he turned to the greenuniformed official. "Is it possible to have an audience? I think it's important."

"You may have to wait a little while," the official said, "but I'm sure she will always grant audience to you."

The Bear looked a little smug at that, Juli noticed.

They sat down to wait and from time to time Herkie patted Juli's arm reassuringly.

It was actually not long before the official reappeared. "She will see you now," he said.

He led them through a long corridor to a large room at the end of

which was a dais with a chair. "Not quite a throne," Juli thought to herself. Behind the chair stood a young and handsome male, a True Man. In the chair sat a woman, old, old beyond imagining; her wrinkled hands were claws, but in the haggard, wrinkled face one could still detect some trace of beauty.

Juli's sense of bewilderment grew. She knew this person, but she did not. Her sense of orientation, already splintered by the events of the past "day," almost disintegrated. She grabbed Herkie's hand as if it were the only familiar element in a world she could not understand.

The woman spoke. Her voice was old and weak, but she spoke in German.

"So, Juli, you have come. Laird told me he was bringing you in. I am so happy to see you, and to know that you are all right."

Juli's senses reeled. She knew, she knew, but she could not believe. Too much had changed, too much had happened, in the short time that she had returned to life.

Gasping, tentatively, she whispered, "Carlotta?"

Her sister nodded. "Yes, Juli, it is I. And this is my husband, Laird."

He nodded her head toward the handsome young man behind her. "He brought me in about two hundred years ago, but unfortunately as an Ancient I cannot undergo the rejuvenation process that has been developed since we left the Earth."

Juli began to sob. "Oh, Carlotta, it's all so hard to believe. And you're so old! You were only two years older than I."

"Darling, I've had two hundred years of bliss. They couldn't rejuvenate me but they could at least prolong my life. Now, it is not from purely altruistic purposes that I have had Laird bring you in. Karla is still out there, but since she was only sixteen when she was suspended, we thought that you would be better suited to the task.

"In fact, we really didn't do you any favor in bringing you in because now you too will begin to age. But to be forever in suspended animation is not any life either."

"Of course not," Juli said. "And anyway, if I had lived a normal life, I would have aged."

Carlotta leaned over to kiss her.

"At least we're together at last," Juli sighed.

"Darling," Carlotta said, "it is wonderful to have even this little time together. You see, I'm dying. There comes a point when, with all technology, the scientists cannot keep a body alive. And we need help, help with the rebellion."

"The rebellion?"

"Yes. Against the Jwindz. They were Chineseans, philosophers. Now they are the true rulers of the Earth, and we -- so they believe -- are merely their Instrumentality, their police force. Their power is not over the body of man but over the soul. That is almost a forgotten word here now. Say 'mind' instead. They call themselves the Perfect Ones and have sought to remake man in their own image. But they are remote, removed, bloodless.

"They have recruited persons of all races, but man has not responded well. Only a handful aspire to the kind of esthetic perfection the Jwindz have as their goal. So the Jwindz have resorted to their knowledge of drugs and opiates to turn True Man into a tranquilized, indifferent people -- to make it easy to govern them, to control everything that they do. Unfortunately some of our" -- she nodded toward Laird -- "descendants have joined them.

"We need you, Juli. Since I came back from the ancient world, Laird and I have done what we could to free True Men from this form of slavery, because it is slavery. It is a lack of vitality, a lack of meaning to life, We used to have a word for it in the old days. Remember? 'Zombie.'"

"What do you want me to do?"

During the entire conversation between the sisters, Herkie, the

Bear, and Laird had remained silent.

Now Laird spoke. "Until Carlotta came to us, we were drifting along, uncaring, in the power of the Jwindz. We did not know what it was, really, to be a human being. We felt that our only purpose in life was to serve the Jwindz: If they were perfect, what other function could we perform? It was our duty to serve their needs-to maintain and guard the cities, to keep out the Wild, to administer the drugs. Some of the Instrumentality even preyed upon the Unauthorized Men, the Unforgiven, and, as a last resort, the True Men, to supply their laboratories.

"But now many of us no longer believe in the perfection of the Jwindz -- or perhaps we have come to believe in something more than human perfection. We have been serving men. We should have been serving mankind.

"Now we feel that the time has come to put an end to this tyranny. Carlotta and I have allies among some of our descendants and among some of the Unforgiven and, as you have seen, even among the Unauthorized Men and other animal-derived persons. I think there must still be a connection from the time that human beings had 'pets' in the old days."

Juli looked about her and realized that Herkie was quietly purring. "Yes," she said, "I see what you mean."

Laird continued, "What we want to do is to set up a real Instrumentality -- not a force for the service of the Jwindz, but one for the service of man. We are determined that never again shall man betray his own image. We will establish the Instrumentality of Mankind, one benevolent but not manipulative."

Carlotta nodded slowly. Her aged face showed concern. "I will die in a few days and you will marry Laird. You will be the new Vomact. With any luck by the time you are as old as I am, your descendants and some of mine should have freed the Earth from the power of the Jwindz."

Juli again felt completely disoriented. "I'm to marry your husband?"

Again Laird spoke. "I have loved your sister well for more than two hundred years. I shall love you too, because you are so much like her. Do not think that I am being disloyal. She and I have discussed this for some time before I brought you in. If she were not dying, I should continue to be faithful to her. But now we need you."

Carlotta concurred. "It is true. He has made me very happy, and he will make you happy too, through all the years of your life. Juli, I could not have had you brought in had I not had some plan for your future. You could never be happy with one of those drugged, tranquilized True Men. Trust me in this, please. It is the only thing to do."

Tears formed in Juli's eyes. "To have found you at last and then to lose you after such a short time..."

Herkie patted her hand and Juli looked up to see sympathetic tears in her clouded blue eyes.

" " "

It was three days later that Carlotta died. She died with a smile on her face and Laird and Juli each holding one of her hands. She spoke at the last and pressed their hands. "I'll see you later. Out among the stars."

Juli wept uncontrollably.

They postponed the wedding ceremony for seven days of mourning. For once the City gates were opened and the static fields of electricity cut off because even the Jwindz could not control the feelings of the animal-derived persons, the Unauthorized Men, even some of the True Men, toward this woman who had come to them from an ancient world.

The Bear was particularly mournful. "I was the one who found her, you know, after you brought her in," he said to Laird.

"I remember."

So that's what the Bear meant when he said 'another one,' Bil said.

Charls and Oda, Bil and Kae were among the mourners. Juli saw them and thought, My dear little puppy-dog people, but this time the thought was

loving and not contemptuous.

Oda's tail wagged. I've thought of something, she spieked at Juli. Can you meet me down by the cenote in two days' time?

Yes, thought Juli, proud of herself at being sure, for the first time, that her thought had gone only to the person for whom it was meant. She knew that she had been successful when she glanced at Laird's face and saw that he had not read her thought.

When she met Oda at the cenote, Juli did not know what was expected of her -- nor what she herself expected.

You must be very careful in directing your thoughts, Oda spieked. We never know when some of the Jwindz are overhead.

I think I'm learning, Juli spieked. Oda nodded.

What my idea was, it was to make use of the Fighting Trees. The True Men are still afraid of the sickness. But, you see, I know that the sickness is gone. I got so tired of brushing past the trees and always worrying about it that I decided to test it out, and I ate a pod from one of the Fighting Trees -- and nothing happened. I've never been afraid of them since. So if we met there, we rebels, in a grove of the Fighting Trees, the officials of the Jwindz would never find us. They'd be afraid to hunt for its there.

Juli's face lightened. That's a very good idea. May I consult with Laird?

Certainly. He has always been one of us. And your sister was too.

Juli was sad again. I feel so alone.

No. You have Laird, and you have us, and the Bear, and his housekeeper. And in time there will be others. Now we must part.

Juli returned from her meeting with Oda at the cenote to find Laird deep in conference with the Bear and a young man who bore a singular resemblance to Laird -- and to the youthful Carlotta that Juli remembered.

Laird smiled at her. "This is your great-nephew," he said, "my grand-son."

Juli's perspective of time and age received another jolt. Laird appeared to be no older than his grandson. How do I fit in to this? she wondered, and accidentally broadcast the thought.

"I know that all of this must be difficult for you to comprehend," Laird said, taking her hand. "Carlotta had some difficulty in adjusting too. But try, please try, my dear, because we need you so desperately and I, I particularly, have already become dependent on you. I could not face Carlotta's loss without you."

Juli felt a vague sense of embarrassment. "What is my" -- she could not say it -- "what is his name?"

"I beg your pardon. He is named Joachim for your uncle."

Joachim smiled and then gave her a brief hug. "You see," he said, "the reason we need your help with the rebellion is the cult that was built up around your sister, my grandmother. When she returned to earth as an Ancient One, there was a kind of cult set up about her. That is why she was 'The Vomact' and why you must also be. It is a rallying point for those of us who oppose the power of the Jwindz. Grandmother Carlotta had a minikingdom here, and even the Jwindz could not keep people from coin-ing to pay her court. You must have realized that at the mourning session for her."

"Yes, I could see that she had a great deal of respect from many kinds of people. If she was in favor of a rebellion, I am sure she must have been correct. Carlotta was always a most upright person. And now I must tell you about the plan that Oda proposes." She proceeded to do so.

"It might work," the Bear said. "True Men have been very careful about observing the tambu of the Fighting Trees. In fact, I may even have an improvement on Oda's idea." He began to get excited and dropped his spectacles. Joachim picked them up.

"Bear," he said, "you always do that when you're excited."

"I think it means I have a good idea," the Bear said. "Look, why don't we use the manshonyaggers?"

The others looked at him in bewilderment and Laird said slowly, "I

think I may see what you're getting at. The manshonyaggers, although there are not many of them left, respond only to German and --"

"And the leaders of the Jwindz are Chinesian, too proud to have learned another language," the Bear broke in, smiling.

"Yes. So if we establish headquarters in the Fighting Trees and let it be known that the new Vomact is there --"

"And surround the grove with manshonyaggers --"

They were breaking in upon each other as the idea began to take shape. The excitement grew.

"I think it will work," Laird said.

"I think so too," Joichim reassured him. "I will get together the Band of Cousins and after you're established in the Fighting Trees, we'll make a raid on the drug center and bring the tranquilizers to the grove, where we can destroy them."

"The Band of Cousins?" Juli asked.

"Carlotta's and my descendants who have not joined the Instrumentality of the Jwindz," Laird told her.

"Why would any of them have joined?"

Laird shrugged. "Greed, power, all kinds of very human motives. Even an illusion of physical immortality. We tried to give our children ideals but the corruption of power is very great. You must know that."

Remembering a howling, hateful face with a black mustache above the mouth, a face from her own time and place, Juli nodded.

Herkie and the Bear, Charls abd Oda, Bil and Kae accompanied Juli into the grove of Fighting Trees. At first Bil and Kae were reluctant. It was only after Oda's confession of having eaten a pod that they agreed to go, and then Bil's reaction was that of a typical father.

"How could you take such a chance?" he asked Oda.

Her eyes were bright and her tail wagged furiously. "I just had to," she said.

He glinced at Herkie. "Now if she had done it..."

Herkie drew herself tip to her full height. "I think that the relationship if curiosity and cats has, perhaps, been a little exaggerated," she said. "Actually, we're generally rather careful."

"I didn't mean to be disrespectful," Bil said hastily, and Herkie saw his tail droop.

"It's a common misconception," she said kindly, and Bil's tail straightened.

When they reached the center of the grove, they spread a picnic and gathered around. Juli was hungry. In the City she had been offered synthetic food, no doubt healthful and full of vitamins but not satisfying to the appetite of an Ancient Prussian girl. The animal-derived persons had brought real food and Juli ate happily.

The Bear, in particular, noticed her enjoyment. "You see," he said, "that's how they did it."

"Did what?" asked Juli, her mouth full of bread.

"How they drugged the majority of True Men. True Men were so accustomed to living on synthetic foodstuffs that when the Jwindz introduced tranquilizers into the synthetics, True Men never knew the difference. I hope that if the Band of Cousins succeeds in capturing the drug supply, the withdrawal symptoms for the True Men will not be too severe."

Bil looked up. "That's something we should consider," he said. "If there arc severe withdrawal symptoms, a number of the True Men may be tempted to join the Jwindz in an attempt to recover the drugs."

The Bear nodded. "That's what I was thinking," he said.

It was several days before Laird, Joachim, and the Band of Cousins joined them. By this time Juli had become almost accustomed to the daylight darkness under the thick leaves and branches of the Fighting Trees, and the soft-glowing illumination at night.

Laird greeted her affectionately. "I have missed you," he said simply. "Already I have grown very attached to you."

Juli blushed and changed the subject. "Did you -- or, rather, the Band of Cousins -- succeed?"

"Oh, yes. There was very little difficulty. The officials of the Jwindz had grown quite careless since they have had the minds of most True Men under their control for generations. It was only a matter of Joachim's pretending to be tranquilized, and he had free access to the drug room. Over a period of days he managed to transfer the entire supply to the Cousins and to substitute placebos. I wonder when that will be discovered."

"As soon as the first withdrawal symptoms occur, I should think," Joachiim ventured.

Something that had been nagging at the hack of Juli's mind surfaced. "You have your grandson here, and the Band of Cousins. But where are your and Carlotta's own children? Obviously you had some."

His face saddened. "Of course. But since they were half-Ancient, they could not only not be rejuvenated, but the combination of the chemistry made it such that their lives could not even be prolonged. They all died in their seventies and eighties. It was a great sadness to Carlotta and me. You too, my dear, if we have children, must be prepared for that. By the time of the next generation, however, the Ancient blood is sufficiently diluted that rejuvenation may take place. Joachim is a hundred and fifty years old."

"And you? And you?" she said.

He looke at her. "This is very hard on you, isn't it? I'm over three hundred years old."

Juli could ot disbelieve but neither could she quite comprehend. Laird was so handsome and youthful; Carlotta had been so old.

She tried to shake the cobwebs from her mind. "What do we do with the tranquilizers now hat we have them?"

Oda had approached at the latter part of the conversation. Her eyes sparkled and her tail wagged madly. "I have an idea," she announced.

"I hope it's as good as your last one," Laird said.

"I hope so too. Look, why don't we just feed the tranquilizers back to the officials? The Jwindz probably will never notice. Then we won't have to worry about fighting them. They could just gradually die off or maybe... do you think... we could send them out into space? To another planet?"

Laird nodded slowly. "You do have good ideas. Yes, to feed the tranquilizers back to them... but how?"

"We work well together," the Bear said, indicating Oda. "She has an idea and it triggers another one in my mind." Carefully he put on his spectacles. "I have here a map of the terrain in this vicinity. Except for the cenote there is no water for many kilometers in any direction. If we dropped the tranquilizers -- all of them -- into the cenote, and then if one of the Cousins could prepare the synthetic food of the Jwindz's officials so it was very spicy -- I think that the problem would be solved."

Laird said, "We do have one of the Cousins who has infiltrated the Jwindz. But what would induce them to drink the water?"

Charls had joined the group. "I have heard," he said, "of an ancient spice people used to like which eventually produced thirst. It used to be found in the oceans, before they were filled with grass. But some of it remains on the banks of the sea. I believe that it was called 'salt.'"

"Now that you mention it, I've heard of that too." The Bear nodded wisely. "So that is what we need to do. 'Salt.' We introduce it into their food, then we entice them to the grove with the knowledge that the new Vomact is here together with the heart of a rebellion. It's risky but I think it's the best idea, or combination of ideas, yet."

Laird agreed "It's is you say, risky, but it may work, and they're lot likely to execute any of us if it doesn't. They'll just tranquilize us. I think that we have a better than even chance of winning. And if True Man is not revitalized, not freed from this bondage of tranquility and apathy, I believe that the entire breed will he extinguished within a few hundred

years. They have come to the point that they care about nothing."

All worlds know how the plan was carried out. It was exactly as the Bear had foretold. The thirsty officials of the Jwindz, their food highly salted, drank eagerly from the water of the cenote and were quickly tranquilized. They put up no opposition to the members of the rebellion who soon thereafter emerged from the shelter of the Fighting Trees.

Joachim was sad. "One of my brothers had joined them," he said.

Laird laid a comforting arm across his shoulder. "Well, he's only tranquilized. We may be able to help him as he comes out of it."

"Perhaps, but it violates all my principles."

"Don't be too high-minded, Joachim. Principles are fine, but there is such a thing as rehabilitation."

And this was the way that the Instrumentality of Mankind was established. In time it would govern many worlds. Juli, by virtue of being the Vomact, became one of the first Ladies of the Instrumentality. Laird, as her husband, was one of the first Lords.

Juli lived to see some of her descendants among the first great Scanners in Space. She was very proud of them, and she was very old. Laird, of course, was as young as ever. All of her animal-descended friends had nag since died. She missed them, although Laird was ever faithful.

At last, so old that she had difficulty in moving, Juli called Laird to her. She looked up into his handsome face. "My darling, you have made me very happy, just as you did Carlotta. But now I am old and, I think, dying. You are still so young and vital. I wish it were possible for me to undergo the rejuvenation, but since it isn't possible, I think we should call in Karla."

He responded so rapidly that her feelings were somewhat hurt. "Yes, I think that we should call in Karla."

He turned away from her momentarily.

She said with a hint of tears in her voice, "I know that you will make her happy and love her very much."

His silence continued for a moment before he turned back to her.

She saw suddenly that there were lines in his face, lines she had never seen before.

"What is happening to you?" she asked.

"My darling and last love," he said, "I will be losing you twice. I can not bear it. I have asked the physician for medicine to counteract the rejuvenation. In an hour I shall be as old as you. We are going together. And somewhere out there we will meet Carlotta and we will hold hands, the three of us among the stars. Karla will find her own man and her own fate."

Together they sat and watched the descent of Karla's spacecraft.

SCANNERS LIVE IN VAIN

Here, humanity is still emerging from the Dark Age that is more fully described in the stories "Queen of the Afternoon" and "Mark Elf" and which reveal the "Beasts" to be mutated, intelligent animals and the "manshonyaggers" to be old German killing machines -- taken from Menschenjager, or "hunter of men." At the time Smith wrote the story in 1945, there was an abandoned shop in his neighborhood called the Little Cranch -- what "cranch" meant, he had no idea -- but he used the word anyway. The "ancient lady" ancestress of Vomact was one of the Vomacht sisters mentioned in Dark Age stories -- which one, we don't know.

Martel was angry. He did not even adjust his blood away from anger. He stamped across the room by judgment, not by sight. When he saw the table hit the floor, and could tell by the expression on Luci's face that the table must have made a loud crash, he looked down to see if his leg was broken. It was not. Scanner to the core, he had to scan himself. The action was reflex and automatic. The inventory included his legs, abdomen, Chestbox

of instruments, hands, arms, face and back with the mirror. Only then did Martel go back to being angry. He talked with his voice, even though he knew

that his wife hated its blare and preferred to have him write.

"I tell you, I must cranch. I have to cranch. It's my worry, isn't it?"

When Luci answered, he saw only a part of he words as he read her lips: "Darling... you're my husband... right to love you... dangerous... do it... dangerous... wait..."

He faced her, but put sound in his voice, letting the blare hurt her again: "I tell you, I'm going to cranch."

Catching her expression, he became rueful and a little tender: "Can't you understand what it means to me? To get out of this terrible prison in my own head? To be a man again -- hearing your voice, smelling smoke? To feel again -- to feel my feet on the ground, to feel the air move against my face? Don't you know what it means?"

Her wide-eyed worrisome concern thrust him back into pure annoyance. He read only a few words as her lips moved: "...love you... your own good... don't you think I want you to be human?... your own good... too much... he said... they said...."

When he roared at her, he realized that his voice must be particularly bad. He knew that the sound hurt her no less than did the words: "Do you think I wanted you to marry a scanner? Didn't I tell you we're almost as low as the habrermans? We're dead, I tell you. We've got to be dead to do our work. How can anybody go to the up-and-out? Can you dream what raw space is? I warned you. But you married me. All right, you married a man. Please, darling, let me be a man. Let me hear your voice, let me feel the warmth of being alive, of being human. Let me!"

He saw by her look of stricken assent tnat he had won the argument. He did not use his voice again. Instead, he pulled his tablet up from where it hung against his chest. He wrote on it, using the pointed fingernail of his right forefinger -- the talking nail of a scanner -- in quick cleancut script: Pls, drlng, whrs crnchnng wire?

She pulled the long gold-sheathed wire out of the pocket of her apron. She let its field sphere fall to the carpeted floor. Swiftly, dutifully, with the deft obedience of 3 a scanner's wife, she wound the cranching wire around his head, spirally around his neck and chest. She avoided the instruments set in his chest. She even avoided the radiating scars around the instruments, the stigmata of men who had gone up and into the out. Mechanically he lifted a foot as she slipped the wire between his feet. She drew the wire taut. She snapped the small plug into the high-burden control next to his heart-reader. She helped him to sit down, arranging his hands for him, pushing his head back into the cup at the top of the chair. She turned then, full-face toward him, so that he could read her lips easily. Her expression was composed:

"Ready, darling?"

She knelt, scooped up the sphere at the other end of the wire, stood erect calmly, her back to him. He scanned her, and saw nothing in her posture but grief which would have escaped the eye of anyone but a scanner. She spoke: he could see her chest-muscles moving. She realized that she was not facing him, and turned so that be could see her lips:

"Ready at last?"

He smiled a yes.

She turned her back to him again. (Luci could never bear to watch him go under the wire.) She tossed the wire-sphere into the air. It caught in the force-field, and hung there. Suddenly it glowed. That was all. All -- except for the sudden red stinking roar of coming back to his senses. Coming back, across the wild threshold of pain.

When he awakened, under the wire, he did not feel as though he had just crunched. Even though it was the second cranching within the week, he felt fit. He lay in the chair. His ears drank in the sound of air touching

things in the room. He heard Luci breathing in the next room, where she was hanging up the wire to cool. He smelt the thousand and one smells that are in anybody's room: the crisp freshness of the germ-burner, the sour-sweet tang of the humidifier, the odor of the dinner they had just eaten, the smells of clothes, furniture, of people themselves. All these were pure delight. He sang a phrase or two of his favorite song:

"Here's to the Haberman, up-and-out!
"Up -- oh -- and out -o oh! up-and-out!"

He heard Luci chuckle in the next room. He gloated over the sounds of her dress as she swished to the doorway.

She gave him her crooked little smile. "You sound all right. Are you all right, really?"

Even with this luxury of senses, he scanned. He took the flash-quick inventory which constituted his professional skill. His eyes swept in the news of the instruments. Nothing showed off scale, beyond the nerve compression hanging in the edge of Danger. But he could not worry about the nerve-box. That always came through cranching. You couldn't get under the wire without having it show on the nerve-box. Some day the box would go to Overload and drop back down to Dead. That was the way a haberman ended. But you couldn't have everything. People who went to the up-and-out had to pay the price for space.

Anyhow, he should worry! He was a scanner. A good one, and he knew it. If he couldn't scan himself, who could? This cranching wasn't too dangerous. Dangerous, but not too dangerous.

Luci put out her hand and ruffled his hair as if she had been reading his thoughts, instead of just following them: "But you know you shouldn't have! You shouldn't!"

"But I did!" He grinned at her.

Her gaiety still forced, she said: "Come on, darling, let's have a good time. I have almost everything there is in the icebox -- all your favorite tastes. And I have two new records just full of smells. I tried them out myself, and even I liked them. And you know me --"

"Which?"

"Which what, you old darling?"

He slipped his hand over her shoulders as he limped out of the room. (He could never go back to feeling the floor beneath his feet, feeling the air against his face, without being bewildered and clumsy. As if cranching was real, and being a haberman was a bad dream. But he was a haberman, and a scanner. "You know what I meant, Luci... the smells, which you have. Which one did you like, on the record?"

"Well-l-l," said she, judiciously, "there were some lamb chops that were the strangest things --"

He interrupted: "What are lambtchots?"

"Wait till you smell them. Then guess. I'll tell you this much. It's a smell hundreds and hundreds of years old. They found about it in the old books."

"Is a lambtchot a beast?"

"I won't tell you. You've got to wait," she laughed, as she helped him sit down and spread his testing dishes before him. He wanted to go back over the dinner first, sampling all the pretty things he had eaten, and savoring them this time with his now-living lips and tongue.

When Luci had found the music wire and had thrown its sphere up into the force-field, he reminded her of the new smells. She took out the long glass records and set the first one into a transmitter.

"Now sniff!"

A queer, frightening, exciting smell came over the room. It seemed like nothing in this world, nor like anything from the up-and-out. Yet it was familiar. His mouth watered. His pulse beat a little faster; he scanned his heartbox. (Faster, sure enough.) But that smell, what was it? In mock

perplexity, be grabbed her hands, looked into her eyes, and growled:

"Tell me, darling! Tell me, or I'll eat you up!"

"That's just right!"

"What?"

"You're right. It should make you want to eat me. It's meat."

"Meat. Who?"

"Not a person," said she, knowledgeably, "a Beast. A Beast which people used to eat. A lamb was a small sheep -- you've seen sheep out in the Wild, haven't you? -- and a chop is part of its middle -- here!" She pointed at her chest.

Martel did not hear her. All his boxes had swung over toward Alarm, some to Danger. He fought against the roar of his own mind, forcing his body into excess excitement. How easy it was to be a scanner when you really stood outside your own body, haberman-fasliion, and looked back into it with your eyes alone. Then you could manage the body, rule it coldly even in the enduring agony of space. But to realize that you were a body, that this thing was ruling you, that the mind could kick the flesh and send it roaring off into panic! That was bad.

He tried to remember the days before he had gone into the haberman device, before he had been cut apart for the up-and-out. Had he always been subject to the rush of his emotions from his mind to his body, from his body back to his mind, confounding him so that he couldn't scan? But he hadn't been a scanner then.

He knew what had hit him. Amid the roar of his own pulse, he knew. In the nightmare of the up-and-out, that smell had forced its way through to him, while their ship burned off Venus and the habermans fought the collapsing metal with their bare hands. He had scanned then: all were in. Danger. Chestboxes went up to Overload and dropped to Dead all around him as he had moved from man to man, shoving the drifting corpses out of his way as he fought to scan each man in turn, to clamp vises on unnoticed broken legs, to snip the sleeping valve on men whose instruments showed they were hopelessly near Overload. With men trying to work and cursing him for a scanner while he, professional zeal aroused, fought to do his job and keep them alive in the Great Pain of Space, he had smelled that smell. It had fought its way along his rebuilt nerves, past the habermail cuts, past all the safeguards of physical and mental discipline. In the wildest hour of tragedy, he had smelled aloud. He remembered it was like a bad cranching, connected with the fury and nightmare all around him, He had even stopped his work to scan himself, fearful that the first effect might come, breaking past all Haberman cuts and ruining him with the pain of space. But he had come through. His own instruments stayed and stayed at Danger, without nearing Overload. He had done his job, and won a commendation for it. He had even forgotten the burning ship.

All except the smell.

And here the smell was all over again--the smell of meat -- with-fire...

Luci looked at him with wifely concern. She obviously thought he had crunched too much, and was about to haberman back. She tried to be cheerful: "You'd better rest, honey."

He whispered to her: "Cut off -- that -- smell."

She did not question his word. She cut the transmitter. She even crossed the room and stepped up the room controls until a small breeze flitted across the floor and drove the smells up to the ceiling.

He rose, tired and stiff. (His instruments were normal, except that heart was fast and nerves still hanging on the edge of Danger.) he spoke sadly:

"Forgive me, Luci. I suppose I shouldn't have crunched. Not so soon again. But darling, I have to get out from being a Haberman. How can I ever be near you? How can I be a man -- not hearing my own voice, not even feeling my own life as it goes through my veins? I love you, darling. Can't I ever be near you?"

Her pride was disciplined and automatic: "But you're a scanner!"

"I know I'm a scanner. But so what?"

She went over the words, like a tale told a thousand times to reassure herself: "You are the bravest of the brave, and most skillful of the skilled. All mankind owes most honor to the scanner, who unites the Earths of mankind. Scanners are the protectors of the habermans. They are the judges in the up-and-out. They make men live in the place where men need desperately to die. They are the most honorocci of mankind, and even the chiefs of the Instrumentality are delighted to pay them homage!"

With obstinate sorrow he demurred: "Luci. we've heard that all before. But does it pay us back --"

"'Scanners work for more than pay. They are the strong guards of mankind.' Don't you remember that?"

"But our lives, Luci. What can you get out of being the wife of a scanner? Why did you marry me? I'm human only when I cranch. The rest of the time -- you know what I am. A machine. A man turned into a machine. A man who has been killed and kept alive for duty. Don't you realize what I miss?"

"Of course, darling, of course --"

He went on: "Don't you think I remember my childhood? Don't you think I remember what it is to be a man and not a haberman? To walk and feel my feet on the ground? To feel a decent clean pain instead of watching my body every minute to see if I'm alive? How will I know if I'm dead? Did you ever think of that, Luci? How will I know if I'm dead?"

She ignored the unreasonableness of his outburst. Pacifyingly, she said: "Sit down, darling. Let me make you some kind of drink. You're overwrought."

Automatically, he scanned. "No I'm not! Listen to me. How do you think it feels to be in the up-and-out with the crew tied-for-space all around you? How do you think it feels to watch them sleep? How do you think I like scanning, scanning, scanning month after month, when I can feel the pain of space beating against every pirt of my body, trying to get past my haberman blocks? How do you think I like to wake the men when I have to, and have them hate me for it? Have you ever seen habermans fight -- strong men fighting, and neither knowing pain, fighting until one reaches Overload? Do you think about that, Luci?" Triumphantly he added: "Can you blame me if I cranch, and come back to being a men, just two days a month?"

"I'm not blaming you, darling. Let's enjoy your cranch. Sit down now, and have a drink."

He was sitting down, resting his face in his hands, while she fixed the drink, using natural fruits out of bottles in addition to the secure alkaloids. He watched her restlessly and pitied her for marrying a scanner; and then, though it was unjust, resented having to pity her.

Just as she turned to hand him the drink, they both jumped a little is the phone ring. It should not have rung. They had turned it off. It rang agiin, obviously on the emergency circuit. Stepping ahead of Luci, Martel strode over to the phone and looked into it. Vomact was looking at him.

The custom of Scanners entitled him to be brusque, even with a senior scanner, on certain given occasions. This was one.

Before Vomact could speak, Martel spoke two words into the plate, not caring whether the old mam could read lips or not:

"Cranching. Busy."

He cut the switch and went back to Luci.

The phone rang again.

Luci said, gently, "I can find out what it is, darling. Here, take your drink and sit down."

"Leave it alone," said her husband. "No one has a right to call when I'm cranching. He knows that. He ought to know that."

The phone rang again. Tn a fury, Martel rose and went to the plate. he cut it back on. Vomact was on the screen. Before Martel could speak, Vomact held up his talking nail in line with his heartbox. Martel reverted

to discipline:

"Scanner Martel present and waiting, sir."

The lips moved solemnly: "Top emergency."

"Sir, I am under the wire."

"Top emergency."

"Sir, don't you understand? Martel mouthed his words, so he could be sure that Vomact followed. "I.. am... under... the... wire. Unfit... for... Space!"

Vomact repeated: "Top emergency. Report to Central Tie-in."

"But, sir, no emergency like this --"

"Right. Martel. No emergency like this, ever before. Report to Tie-in." With a final glint of kindness, Vomact added: "No need to de-cranch. Report as you are."

This time it was Martel whose phone was cut out. The screen went gray.

He turned to Luci. The temper had gone out of his voice. She came to him. She kissed him, and ruffled his hair. All she could say was,

"I'm sorry."

She kissed him again, knowing his disappointment. "Take good care of yourself, darling. I'll wait."

He scanned, and slipped into his transparent aircoat. At the window he paused, and waved. She called, "Good Luck!" As the air flowed past him he said to himself,

"This is the first time I've felt flight in -- eleven years. Lord, but it's easy to fly if you can feel yourself live!"

Central Tie-in glowed white and austere far ahead. Martel peered. He saw no glare of incoming ships from the up-and-out, no shuddering flare of space-fire out of control. Everything was quiet, as it should be on an off-duty night.

And yet Vomact had called. He had called an emergency higher than space. There was no such thing. But Vomact had called it.

II

When Martel got there, he found about half the Scanners present, two dozen or so of them. He lifted the talking finger. Most of the Scanners were standing face to face, talking in pairs as they read lips. A few of the old, impatient ones were scribbling on their tablets and then thrusting the tablets into other people's faces. All the faces wore the dull dead relaxed look of a haberman. When Martel entered the room, he knew that most of the others laughed in the deep isolated privacy of their own heads, each thinking things it would be useless to express in formal words. It had been a long time since a scanner showed up at a meeting crunched.

Vomact was not there: probably, thought Martel, he was still on the phone calling others. The light of the phone flashed on and off; the bell rang. Martel felt odd when he realized that of all those present, he was the only one to hear that loud bell. It made him realize why ordinary people did not like to be around groups of habermans or Scanners. Martel looked around for company.

His friend Chang was there, busy explaining to some old and testy scanner that he did not know why Vomact had called. Martel looked farther and saw Parizianski. He walked over, threading his way past the others with a dexterity that showed he could feel his feet from the inside, and did not have to watch them. Several of the others stared at him with their dead faces, and tried to smile. But they lacked full muscular control and their faces twisted into horrid masks. (Scanners usually knew better than to show expression on faces which they could no longer govern. Martel added to himself, I swear I'll never smile again unless I'm crunched.)

Pariziatiski gave him the sign of the talking finger. Looking face to face, he spoke:

"You come here crunched?"

Parizianski could not hear his own voice, so the words roared like the words on a broken and screeching phone; Martel was startled, but knew that the inquiry was well meant. No one could be better-natured than me burly Pole.

"Vomact called. Top emergency."

"You told him you were crunched?"

"Yes."

"He still made you come?"

"Yes."

"Then all this -- it is not for Space? You could not go up-and-out? You are like ordinary men?"

"That's right."

"Then why did he call us?" Some pre-haberman habit made Parizianski wave his arms in inquiry. The hand struck the back of the old man behind them. The slap could be heard throughout the room, but only Martel heard it. Instinctively, he scanned Parizianski and the old scanner, and they scanned him back. Only then did the old man ask why Martel had scanned him. When Martel explained that he was under the wire, the old man moved swiftly away to pass on the news that there was a crouched scanner present at the tie-in.

Even this minor sensation could not keep the attention of most of the Scanners from the worry about the top emergency. One young man, who had scanned his first transit just the year before, dramatically interposed himself between Parizianski and Martel. He dramatically flashed his tablet at them:

Is Vmct mad?

The older men shook their heads. Martel, remembering that it had not been too long that the young men had been haberman, mitigated the dead solemnity of the denial with a friendly smile. He spoke in a normal voice, saying:

"Vomact is the senior of Scanners. I am sure that he could not go mad. Would he not see it on his boxes first?"

Martel had to repeat the question, speaking slowly and mouthing his words before the young scanner could understand the comment. The young man tried to make his face smile, and twisted it into a comic mask. But he took up his tablet and scribbled:

Yr rght.

Chang broke away from his friend and came over, his half-Chinese face gleaming in the warm evening. (It's strange, thought Martel, that more Chinese don't become Scanners. Or not so strange perhaps, if you think that they never fill their quota of habermans. Chinese love good living too much. The ones who do scan are a good ones.) Chang saw that Martel was crunched, and spoke with voice:

"You break precedents. Luci must be angry to lose you?"

"She took it well. Chang, that's strange."

"What?"

"I'm crunched, and I can hear. Your voice sounds all right. How did you learn to talk like -- like an ordinary person?"

"I practiced with soundtracks. Funny you noticed it. think I am the only scanner in or between the Earths who can pass for an ordinary man. Mirrors and sound tracks. I found out bow to act."

"But you don't... ?"

"No. I don't feel, or taste, or hear, or smell things any more than you do. Talking doesn't do me much good. But I notice that it cheers up the people around me."

"It would make a difference in the life of Luci."

Chang nodded sagely. "My father insisted on it. He said, 'You may be proud of being a scanner. I am sorry you are not a man. Conceal your defects.' So I tried. I wanted to tell the old boy about the up-and-out, and what we did there, but it did not matter. He said, 'Airplanes were good enough for Confucius, and they are for me too.' The old humbug! He tries so

hard to be Chinese when he can't even read Old Chinese. But he's got wonderful good sense, and for somebody going on two hundred he certainly gets around."

Martel smiled at the thought: "In his airplane?"

Chang smiled back. This discipline of his facial muscles was amazing; a bystander would not think that Chang was a haberman, controlling his eyes, cheeks and lips by cold intellectual control. The expression had the spontaniety of life. Martel felt a flash of envy for Chang when he looked at the dead cold faces of Parizianski and the others. He knew that he himself looked fine: but why shouldn't he? He was crunched. Turning to Parizianski he said,

"Did you see what Chang said about his father? The old boy uses an airplane."

Parizianski made motions with his month, but the sounds meant nothing. He took up his tablet and showed it to Martel ad Chang.

Bzz bzz. Ha ha. Gd ol' boy.

At that moment, Martel heard steps out in the corridor. He could not help looking toward the door. Other eyes followed the direction of his glance.

Vomact came in.

The group shuffled to attention in four parallel lines. They scanned one another. Numerous hands reached across to adjust the electrochemical controls on chestboxes which had begun to load up. One scanner held out a broken finger which his counter-scanner had discovered, and submitted it for treatment and splinting.

Vomact had taken out his staff of office. The cube at the top flashed red light through the room, the lines reformed, and all Scanners gave the sign meaning, Present and ready!

Vomact countered with the stance signifying, I am the senior and take command.

Talking fingers rose in the counter-gesture, We concur and commit ourselves.

Vomact raised his right arm, dropped the wrist as though it were broken, in a queer searching gesture, meaning: Any men around? Any habermans not tied? All clear for the Scanners?

Alone of all those present, the crunched Martel heard the queer rustle of feet as they all turned completely around without leaving position, looking sharply at one another and flashing their beltlights into the dark corners of the great room. When again they faced Vomact, he made a further sign:

All clear. Follow my words.

Martel noticed that he alone relaxed. The others could not know the meaning of relaxation with the minds blocked off up there in their skulls, connected only with the eyes, and the rest of the body connected with the mind only by controlling non-sensory nerves and the instrument boxes on their chests. Martel realized that, crunched as he was, he had expected to hear Vomact's voice: the senior had been talking for some time. No sound escaped his lips. (Vomact never bothered with sound.)

"... and when the first men to go up-and-out went to the moon, what did they find?"

"Nothing," responded the silent chorus of lips.

"Therefore they went farther, to Mars and to Venus. The ships went out year by year, but they did not come back until the Year One of Space. Then did a ship come back with the first effect. Scanners, I ask you, what is the first effect?"

"No one knows. No one knows."

"No one will ever know. Too many are the variables. By what do we know the first effect?"

"By the great pain of space," came the chorus.

"And by what further sign?"

"By the need, oh the need for death."

Vomact again: "And who stopped the need for death?"

"Henry Haberman conquered the first effect, in the Year 93 of Space."

"And, Scanners, I ask you, what did he do?"

"He made the habermans."

"How, O Scanners, are habermans made?"

"They are made with the cuts. The brain is cut from the heart, the lungs. The brain is cut from the ears, the nose. The brain is cut from the mouth, the belly. The brain is cut from desire, and pain. The brain is cut from the world. Save for the eyes. Save for the control of the living flesh."

"And how, O Scanners, is flesh controlled?"

"By the boxes set in the flesh, the controls set in the chest, the signs made to rule the living body, the signs by which the body lives."

"How does a haberman live and live?"

"The haberman lives by control of the boxes."

"Whence come the habermans?"

Martel felt in the coming response a great roar of broken voices echoing through the room as the Scanners, habermans themselves, put sound behind their mouthings:

"Habermans are the scum of mankind. Habermans are the weak, the cruel, the credulous, and the unfit. Habermans are the sentenced-to-more-than-death. Habermans live in the mind alone. They are killed for space but they live for space. They master the ships that connect the Earths. They live in the great pain while ordinary men sleep in the cold, cold sleep of the transit."

"Brothers and Scanners, I ask you now: are we habermans or are we not?"

"We are habermans in the flesh. We are cut apart, brain and flesh. We are ready to go to the up-and-out. All of us have gone through the haberman device."

"We are habermans then?" Vomact's eyes flashed and glittered as he asked the ritual question.

Again the chorused answer was accompanied by a roar of voices heard only by Martel: "Habermans we are, and more, and more. We are the chosen who are habermans by our own free will. We are the agents of the Instrumentality of Mankind."

"What must the others say to us?"

"They must say to us, 'You are the bravest of the brave, the most skillful of the skilled. All mankind owes most honor to the scanner, who unites the Earths of mankind. Scanners are the protectors of the habermans. They are the judges in the up-and-out. They make men live in the place where men need desperately to die. They are the most honored of mankind, and even the chiefs of the Instrumentality are delighted to pay them homage!'"

Vomact stood more erect: "What is the secret duty of the scanner?"

"To keep secret our law, and to destroy the acquirers thereof."

"How to destroy?"

"Twice to the Overload, back and Dead."

"If habermans die, what the duty then?"

The Scanners all compressed their lips for answer. (Silence was the code.) Martel, who -- long familiar with the code -- was a little bored with the proceedings, noticed that Chang was breathing too heavily; he reached over and adjusted Chang's lung-control and received the thanks of Chang's eyes. Vomact observed the interruption and glared at them both. Martel relaxed, trying to imitate the dead cold stillness of the others. It was so hard to do, when you were crunched.

"If others die, what the duty then?" asked Vomact.

"Scanners together inform the Instrumentality. Scanners together accept the punishment. Scanners together settle the case."

"And if the punishment be severe?"

"Then no ships go."

"And if Scanners be not honored?"

"Then no ships go."

"And if a scanner goes unpaid?"

"Then no ships go."

"And if the Others and the Instrumentality are not in all ways at all times mindful of their proper obligation to the Scanners?"

"Then no ships go."

"And what, 0 Scanners, if no ships go?"

"The Earths fall apart. The Wild comes back in. The Old Machines and the Beasts return."

"What is the first known duty of a scanner?"

"Not to sleep in the up-and-out."

"What is the second duty of a scanner?"

"To keep forgotten the name of fear."

"What is the third duty of a scanner?"

"To use the wire of Eustace Cranch only with care, only with moderation." Several pair of eyes looked quickly at Martel before the mouthed chorus went on. "To cranch only at home, only among friends, only for the purpose of remembering, of relaxing, or of begetting."

"What is the word of the scanner?"

"Faithful though surrounded by death."

"What is the motto of the scanner?"

"Awake though surrounded by silence."

"What is the work of the scanner?"

"Labor even in the heights of the up-and-out, loyalty even in the depths of the Earths."

"How do you know a scanner?"

"We know ourselves. We are dead though we live. And we talk with the tablet and the nail."

"What is this code?"

"This code is the friendly ancient wisdom of Scanners, briefly put that we may be mindful and be cheered by our loyalty to one another."

At this point the formula should have run: "We complete the code. Is there work or word for the Scanners?" But Vomact said, and he repeated:

"Top emergency. Top emergency."

They gave him the sign, Present and ready!

He said, with every eye straining to follow his lips:

"Some of you know the work of Adam Stone?"

Martel saw lips move, saying: "The Red Asteroid. The Other who lives at the edge of Space."

"Adam Stone has gone to the Instrumentality, claiming success for his work. He says that he has found how to screen out the pain of space. He says that the up-and-out can be made safe for ordinary men to work in, to stay awake in. He says that there need be no more Scanners."

Beltlights flashed on all over the room as Scanners sought the right to speak. Vomact nodded to one of the older men. "Scanner Smith will speak."

Smith stepped slowly up into the light, watching his own feet. He turned so that they could see his face. He spoke: "I say that this is a lie. I say that Stone is a liar. I say that the Instrumentality must not be deceived."

He paused. Then, in answer to some question from the audience which most of the others did not see, he said:

"I invoke the secret duty of the Scanners."

Smith raised his right hand for emergency attention:

"I say that Stone must die."

III

Martel, still crunched, shuddered as he heard the boos, groans,

shouts, squeiks, grunts and moans which came from the Scanners who forgot noise in their excitement and strove to make their dead bodies talk to one another's deaf cars. Beltlights flashed wildly all over the room. There was a rush for the rostrum and Scanners milled around at the top, vying for attention until Parizianski -- by sheer bulk -- shoved the others aside and down, and turned to mouth it the group.

"Brother Scanners, I want your eyes."

The people on the floor kept moving, with their numb bodies jostling one another. Finally Vomact stepped up in front of Parizianski, faced the others, and said:

"Scanners, be Scanners! Give him your eyes."

Parizianski was not good at public speaking. His lips moved too fast. He waved his hands, which took the eyes of the others away from his lips. Nevertheless, Martel was able to follow most of the message:

"... can't do this. Stone may have succeeded. If he has succeeded, it means the end of the Scanners. It means the end of the habermans, too. None of us will have to fight in the up-and-out. We won't have anybody else going under the wire for a few hours or days of being human. Everybody will be Other. Nobody will have to cranch, never again. Men can be men. The habermans can be killed decently and properly, the way men were killed in the old days, without anybody keeping them alive. They won't have to work in the up-and-out! There will be no more great pain -- think of it! No...more...great...pain! How do we know that Stone is a liar --" Lights began flashing directly into his eyes. (The rudest insult of scanner to scanner was this.)

Vomact again exercised authority. He stepped in front of Parizianski and said something which the others could not see. Parizianski stepped down from the rostrum. Vomact again spoke:

"I think that some of the Scanners disagree with our brother Parizianski. I say that the use of the rostrum be suspended till we have had a chance for private discussion. In fifteen minutes I will call the meeting back to order."

Martel looked around for Vomact when the senior had rejoined the group on the floor. Finding the senior, Martel wrote swift script on his tablet, waiting for a chance to thrust the tablet before the senior's eyes. He had written:

Am crnchd. Rspctfly reqst prmsn lv now, stnd by fr orders.

Being crunched did strange things to Martel. Most meetings that he attended seemed formal, hearteningly ceremonial, lighting up the dark inward eterbities of habermanhood. When he was not crunched, he noticed his body no more than a marble bust notices its marble pedcstal. He had stood with them before. He had stood with them effortless hours, while the long-winded ritual broke through the terrible loneliness behind his eyes, and made him feel that the Scanners, though a confraternity of the damned, were none the less forever honored by the professional requirements of their mutilation.

This time, it was different. Coming crunched, and in full possession of smell-sound-taste-feeling, he reacted more or less as a normal man would. He saw his friends and colleagues as a lot of cruelly driven ghosts, posturing out the meaningless ritual of their indefeasible damnation. What difference did anything make, once you were a haberman? Why all this talk about habermans and Scanners? Habermans were criminals or heretics, and Scanners were gentlemen-volunteers, but they were all in the same fix -- except that Scanners were deemed worthy of the short-time return of the cranching wire, while habermans were simply disconnected while the ships lay in port and were left suspended until they should be awakened, in some hour of emergency or trouble, to work out another spell of their damnation. It was a rare haberman that you saw on the street -- someone of special merit or bravery, allowed to look at mankind from the terrible prison of his own mechanified body. And yet, what scanner ever pitied a haberman? What scanner ever honored a haberman except perfunctorily in the line of duty? What had the Scanners as a guild and a class ever done for the habermans, except to

murder them with a twist of the wrist whenever a haberman, too long beside a scanner, picked up the tricks of the scanning trade and learned how to live at his own will, not the will the Scanners imposed? What could the Others, the ordinary men, know of what went on inside inside the ships? The Others slept in their cylinders, mercifully unconscious until they woke up on whatever other Earth they had consigned themselves to. What could the Others know of the men who had to stay alive within the ship?

What could any Other know of the up-and-out? What Other could look at the biting acid beauty of the stars in open space? What could they tell of the great pain, which started quietly in the marrow, like an ache, and proceeded by the fatigue and nausea of each separate nerve cell, brain cell, touchpoint in the body, until life. itself became a terrible aching hunger for silence and for death?

He was a Scanner, All right, he was a Scanner. He had been a Scanner from the moment when, wholly normal, he had stood in the sunlight before a subchief of the Instrumentality, and had sworn:

"I pledge my honor and my life to mankind. I sacrifice myself willingly for the welfare of mankind. In accpcting the perilous austere honor, I yield all my rights without exception to the Honorable Chiefs of the Instrumentality and to the Honored Confraternity of Scanners."

He had pledged.

He had gone into the Haberman Device.

He remembered his hell. He had not had such a bad one, even though it had seemed to last a hundred-million years, all of them without sleep. He had learned to feel with his eyes. He had learned to see despite the heavy eyeplates set back of his eyeballs to insulate his eyes from the rest of him. He had learned to watch his skin. He still remembered the time he had noticed dampness on his shirt, and had pulled out his scanning mirror only to discover that he had worn a hole in his side by leaning against a vibrating machine. (A thing like that could not happen to him now; he was too adept at reading his own instruments.) He remembered the way that he had gone up-and-out, and the way that the great pain beat into him, despite the fact that his touch, smell, feeling, and hearing were gone for all ordinary purposes. He remembered killing habermans, and keeping others alive, and standing for months beside the Honorable Scanner-Pilot while neither of them slept. He remembered going ashore on Earth Four, and remembered that he had not enjoyed it, and had realized on that day that there was no reward.

Martel stood among the other Scanners. He hated their awkwardness when they moved, their immobility when they stood still. He hated the queer assortment of smells which their bodies yielded unnoticed. He hated the grunts and groans and squawks which they emitted from their deafness. He hated them, and himself.

How could Luci stand him? He had kept his chestbox reading Danger for weeks while he courted her, carrying the cranch wire about with him most illegally, and going direct from one cranch to the other without worrying about the fact his indicators all crept to the edge of Overload. He had wooed her without thinking of what would happen if she did say, "Yes." She had.

"And they lived happily ever after." In old books they did, but how could they, in life? He had had eighteen days under the wire in the whole of the past year yet she had loved him. She still loved him. He knew it. She fretted about him through the long months that he was in the up-and-out. She tried to make home mean something to him even when he was haberman, make food pretty when it could not be tasted, make herself lovable when she could not be kissed -- or might as well not, since a haberman body meant no more than fumiture. Luci was patient.

And now, Adam Stone! (He let his tablet fade: how could he leave, now?)

God bless Adam Stone!

Martel could not help feeling a little sorry for himself. No longer

would the high keen call of duty carry him through two hundred or so years of the Others' time, two million private eternities of his own. He could slouch and relax. He could forget High Space, and let the out-and-out be tended by Others. He could cranch, as much as he dared. He could be almost normal -- almost -- for one year or five years or no years. But at least he could stay with Luci. He could go with her into the Wild, where there were Beasts and Old Machines still roving the dirk places. Perhaps he would die in the excitement of the hunt, throwing spears at an ancient manshonyagger as it leapt from its lair, or tossing hot spheres at the tribesmen of the Unforgiven who still roamed the Wild. There was still life to live, still a good normal death to die, not the moving of a needle out in the silence and agony of Space!

He had been walking about restlessly. His ears were ,attuned to the sounds of normal speech, so that he did not feel like watching the mouthings of his brethren. Now they seemed to have come to a decision. Vomact was moving to the rostrum. Martel looked about for Chang, and went to stand beside him. Chang whispered.

"You're is restless as water in mid-air! What's the matter? De-cranching?"

They both scanned Martel, but the instruments held steady and showed no sign of the cranch giving out.

The great light flared in its call to attention. Again they formed ranks. Vomact thrust his lean old face into the glare, and spoke:

"Scanners and Brothers, I call for a vote." He held himself in the stance which meant: I am the senior and take command.

A beltlight flashed in protest.

It was old Henderson. He moved to the rostrum, spoke to Vomact, and -- with Vomact's nod of approval -- turned full-face to repeat his question:

"Who speaks for the Scanners out in space?"

No beltlight or hand answered.

Henderson and Vomact, face to face, conferred for a few moments.

Then Henderson faced them again:

"I yield to the senior in command. But I do not yield to a meeting of the Confraternity. There are sixty-eight Scanners, and only forty-seven present, of whom one is crunched and U.D. I have therefore proposed that the senior in command assume authority only over an emergency committee of the Confraternity, not over a meeting. Ts that agreed and understood by the honorable Scanners?"

Hands rose in assent.

Chang murmured in Martel's ear, "Lot of difference that makes! Who can tell the difference between a meeting and a committee?" Martel agreed with the words, but was even more impressed with the way that Chang, while haberman, could control his own voice.

Vomact resumed chairmanship: "We now vote on the question of Adam Stone.

"First, we can assume that he has not succeeded, and that his claims are lies. We know that from our practical experience as Scanners. The pain of space is only part of scanning." (But the essential part, the basis of it all, thought Martel.) "and we can rest assured that Stone cannot solve the problem of space discipline."

"That tripe again," whispered Chang, unheard save by Martel.

"The space discipline of our confraternity has kept high space clean of war and dispute. Sixty-eight disciplined men control all high space. We are removed by our oath and our habermm status from all Earthly passions.

"Therefore, if Adam Stone has conquered the pain of space, so that Others can wreck our confraternity and bring to space the trouble and ruin which afflicts Earths, I say that Adam Stone is wrong. If Adam Stone succeeds, Scanners live in vain!

"Secondly, if Adam Stone has not conquered the pain of space, he will cause great trouble in all the Earths. The Instrumentality and the

subcllicfs may not give us as many habermans as we need to operate the ships of mankind. There will be wild stories, and fewer recruits, and, worst of all, the discipline of the Confraternity may relax if this kind of nonsensical heresy is spread around.

"Therefore, if Adam Stone has succeeded, he threatens the ruin of the Confraternity and should die.

"I move the death of Adam Stone."

And Vomact made the sign, The honorable Scanners are pleased to vote.

IV

Martel grabbed wildly for his beltlight. Chang, guessing ahead, had his light out and ready; its bright beam, voting No, shone straight up at the ceiling. Martel got his light out and threw its beam upward in dissent. Then he looked around. Out of the forty-seven present, he could see only five or six glittering.

Two more lights went on Vomact stood as erect as a frozen corpse. Vomact's eyes flashed as he stared back and forth over the group, looking for lights. Several more went on. Finally Vomact took the closing stance:

May it please the Scanners to count the vote.

Three of the older men went up on the rostrum with Vomact. They looked over the room. (Martel thought: These damned ghosts are voting on the life of a real man, a live man! They have no right to do it. I'll tell the Instrumentality! But he knew that he would not. He thought of Luci and what she might gain by the triumph of Adam Stone: the heart-breaking folly of the vote was then almost too much for Martel to bear.)

All three of the tellers held up their hands in unanimous agreement on the sign of the number: Fifteen against.

Vomact dismissed them with a bow of courtesy. He turned and again took the stance: I am the senior and take command.

Marveling at his own daring, Martel flashed his beltlight on. He knew that any one of the bystanders might reach over and twist his heartbox to Overload for such an act. He felt Chang's hand reaching to catch him by the aircoat. But he eluded Chang's grasp and ran, faster than a scanner should, to the platform. As he ran., he wondered what appeal to make. It was no use talking common sense. Not now. It had to be law.

He jumped up on the rostrum beside Vomact, and took the stance: Scanners, an Illegality!

He violated good custom while speaking, still in the stance: "A committee has no right to vote death by a majority vote. It takes two-thirds of a full meeting."

He felt Vomact's body lunge behind him, felt himself failing from the rostrum, hitting the floor, hurting his knees and his touch-aware hands. He was helped to his feet. He was scanned, Some scanner he scarcely knew took his instruments and toned him down.

Immediately Martel felt more calm, more detached, and hated himself for feeling so.

He looked up at the rostrum. Vomact maintained the stance signifying: Order!

The Scanners adjusted their ranks. The two Scanners next to Martel took his arms. He shouted at them, but they looked away, and cut themselves off from communication altogether.

Vomact spoke again when he saw the room was quiet: "A scanner came here crunched. Honorable Scanners, I apologize for this. It is not the fault of our great and worthy scanner and friend, Martel. He came here under orders. I told him not to de-cranche. I hoped to spare him in unnecessary haberman. We all know how happily Martel is married, and we wish his brave experiment well. I like Martel. I respect his judgment. I wanted him here. I knew you wanted him here. But he is crunched. He is in no mood to share in the lofty business of the Scanners. I therefore propose a solution which

will meet all the requirements of fairness. I propose that we rule Scanner Martel out of order for his violation of rules. This violation would be inexcusable if Martel were not crunched.

"But at the same time, in all fairness to Martel, I further propose that we deal with the points raised so improperly by our worthy but disqualified brother."

Vomact gave the sign, The Honorable Scanners are pleased to vote. Martel tried to reach his own beltlight; the dead strong hands held him tightly and he struggled in vain. One lone light shone high: Chang's no doubt.

Vomact thrust his face into the light again: "Having the approval of our worthy Scanners and present company for the general proposal, I now move that this committee declare itself to have the full authority of a meeting, and that this committee further make me responsible for all misdeeds which this committee may enact, to be held answerable before the next full meeting, but not before any other authority beyond the closed and secret ranks of Scanners."

Flamboyantly this tii-ne, his triumph evident, Vomact assumed the vote stance.

Only a few lights shone: far less, patently, than a minority of one-fourth.

Vomact spoke again. The light shone on his high calm forehead, on his dead relaxed cheekbones. His lean checks and chin were half-shadowed, save where the lower light picked up and spotlighted his mouth, cruel even in repose. (Vomact was said to be a descendant of some ancient lady who had traversed, in an illegitimate and inexplicable fashion, some hundreds of years of time in a single night. Her name, the Lady Vomact, had passed into legend; but her blood and her archaic lust for mastery lived on in the mute masterful body of her descendent. Martel could believe the old tale, as he stared at the rostrum, wondering what untraceable mutation had left the Vomact kin as predators among mankind.) Calling loudly with the movement of his lips, but still without sound, Vomact appealed:

"The honorable committee is now pleased to reaffirm the sentence of death issued against the heretic and enemy, Adam Stone." Again the vote stance.

Again Chang's light shone lonely in its isolated protest.

Vomact their made his final move:

"I call for the designation of the senior scanner present as the manager of the sentence. I call for authorization to him to appoint executioners, one or many, who shall make evident the will and majesty of Scanners. I ask that I be accountable for the deed, and not for the means. The deed is a noble deed, for the protection of mankind and for the honor of the Scanners; but of the means it must be said that they are to be the best at hand, and no more. Who knows the true way to kill an Other, here on a crowded and watchful Earth? This is no mere matter of discharging a cylindered sleeper, no mere question of upgrading the needle of a haberman. When people die down here, it is not like the up-and-out. They die reluctantly. Killing within the Earth is not our usual business, O Brothers and Scanners, as you know well. You must choose me to choose my agent as I see fit. Otherwise the common knowledge will become the common betrayal whereas if I alone know the responsibility, I alone could betray us, and you will not have far to look in case the Instrumentality comes searching." (What about the killer you choose? thought Martel. He too will know unless -- unless you silence him forever.)

Vomact went into the stance: The Honorable Scanners are pleased to vote.

One light of protest shone; Chang's, again. Martel imagined that he could see a cruel joyful smile on Vomact's dead face -- the smile of a man who knew himself righteous and who found his righteousness upheld and affirmed by militant authority.

Martel tried one last time to come free.

The dead hands held. They were locked like vises until their owners' eyes unlocked them: how else could they hold the piloting month by month?

Martel then shouted: "Honorable Scanners, this is judicial murder."

No ear heard him. He was crunched, and alone.

Nonetheless, he shouted again: "You endanger the Confraternity."

Nothing happened.

The echo of his voice sounded from one end of the room to the other. No held turned. No eyes met his.

Martel realized that as they paired for talk, the eyes of the Scanners avoided him. He saw that no one desired to watch his speech. He knew that behind the cold faces of his friends there lay compassion or amusement. He knew that they knew him to be crunched -- absurd, normal, manlike, temporarily no scanner. But he knew that in this matter the wisdom of Scanners was nothing. He knew that only a crunched scanner could feel with his very blood the outrage and anger which deliberate murder would provoke among the Others. He knew that the Confraternity endangered itself, and knew that the most ancient prerogative of law was the monopoly of death. Even the ancient nations, in the times of the Wars, before the Beasts, before men went into the up-and-out -- even the ancients had known this. How did they say it? Only the state shall kill. The states were gone but the Instrumentality remained, and the Instrumentality could not pardon things which occurred within the Earths but beyond its authority. Death in space was the business, the right of the Scanners: how could the Instrumentality enforce its laws in a place where all men who wakened, wakened only to die in the great pain? Wisely did the Instrumentality leave space to the Scanners, wisely had the Confraternity not meddled inside the Earths. And now the Confraternity itself was going to step forth as an outlaw band, as a gang of rogues as stupid and reckless as the tribes of the Unforgiven!

Martel knew this because he was crunched. Had he been haberman, he would have thought only with his mind, not with his heart and guts and blood. How could the other Scanners know?

Vomact returned for the last time to the rostrum: The committee has met and its will shall be done. Verbally he added: "Senior among you, I ask your loyalty and your silence."

At that point, the two Scanners let his arms go. Martel rubbed his numb hands, sinking his fingers to get the circulation back into the cold fingertips. With real freedom, he began to think of what he might still do. He scanned himself: the crunching held. He might have a day. Well, he could go on even if haberman, but it would be inconvenient, having to talk with finger and tablet. He looked about for Chang. He saw his friend standing patient and immobile in a quiet corner. Martel moved slowly, so as not to attract any more attention to himself than could be helped. He faced Chang, moved until his face was in the light, and then articulated:

"What are we going to do? You're not going to let them kill Adam Stone, are you? Don't you realize what Stone's work will mean to us, if it succeeds? No more Scanners. No more habermans. No more pain in the up-and-out. I tell you, if the others were all crunched, as I am, they would see it in a human way, not with the narrow crazy logic which they used in the meeting. We've got to stop them. How can we do it? What are we going to do? What does Parizianski think? Who has been chosen?"

"Which question do you want me to answer?"

Martel laughed. (It felt good to laugh, even then; it felt, like being a man.) "Will you help me?"

Chang's eyes flashed across Martel's face as Chang answered: "No. No. No."

"You won't help?"

"No."

"Why not, Chang? Why not?"

"I am a scanner. The vote has been taken. You would do the same if you were not in this unusual condition."

"I'm not in an unusual condition. I'm crunched. That merely means that I see things the way that the Others would. I see the stupidity. The recklessness. The selfishness. It is murder."

"What is murder? Have you not killed? You are not one of the Others. You are a Scanner. You will be sorry for what you are about to do, if you do not watch out."

"But why did you vote against Vomact then? Didn't you too see what Adam Stone means to all of us? Scanners will live in vain. Thank God for that! Can't you see it?"

"No."

"But you talk to me, Chang. You are my friend?"

"I talk to you, I am your friend. Why not?"

"But what are you going to do?"

"Nothing, Martel. Nothing."

"Will you help me?"

"No."

"Not even to save Stone?"

"No."

"Then I will go to Parizianski for help."

"It will do no good."

"Why not? He's more human than you, right now."

"He will not help you, because he has the job. Vomact designated him to kill Adam Stone."

Martel stopped speaking in mid-movement. He suddenly took the stance: I thank you, Brother, and I depart.

At the window he turned and faced the room. He saw that Vomact's eyes were upon him. He gave the stance, I thank you, Brother, and I depart, and added the flourish of respect which is shown when seniors are present. Vomact caught the sign, and Martel could see the cruel lips move. He thought he saw the words "... take good care of yourself..." but did not wait to inquire. He stepped backward and dropped out the window.

Once below the window and out of sight, he adjusted his aircoat to a maximum speed. He swam lazily in the air, scanning himself thoroughly, and adjusting his adrenal intake down. He then made the movement of release, and felt the cold air rush past his face like running water.

Adam Stone had to be at Chief Downport.

Adam Stone had to be there.

Wouldn't Adam Stone be surprised in the night? Surprised to meet the strangest of beings, the first renegade among Scanners. (Martel suddenly appreciated that it was of himself he was thinking. Martel the Traitor to Scanners! That sounded strange and bad. But what of Martel, the Loyal to Mankind? Was that not compensation? And if he won, he won Luci. If he lost, he lost nothing -- an unconsidered and expendable haberman. It happened to he himself. But in contrast to the immense reward, to mankind, to the Confraternity, to Luci, what did that matter?)

Martel thought to himself: "Adam Stone will have two visitors tonight. Two Scanners, who are the friends of one another." he hoped that Parizianski was still his friend. "And the world," he added, "depends on which of us gets there first."

Multifaceted in their brightness, the lights of Chief Downport begin to shine through the mist ahead. Martel could see the outer towers of the city and glimpsed the phosphorescent periphery which kept back the Wild, whether Beasts, Machines, or the Unforgiven.

Once more Martel invoked the lords of his chance: "Help me to pass for an Other!"

v

Within the Downport, Martel had less trouble than he thought. He draped his aircoat over his shoulder so that it concealed the instruments. He took up his scanning mirror, and made up his face for the inside, by

adding tone and animation to his blood and nerves until the muscles of his face glowed and the skin gave out a healthy sweat. That way he looked like an ordinary man who had just completed a long night flight.

After straightening out his clothing, and hiding his tablet within his jacket, he faced the problem of what to do about the talking finger. If he kept the nail, it would show him to be a scanner. He would be respected, but he would be identified. He might be stopped by the guards whom the Instrumentality had undoubtedly set around the person of Adam Stone. If he broke the nail -- But he couldn't! No Scanner in the history of the Confraternity had ever willingly broken his nail. That would be resignation, and there was no such thing. The only way out, was in the up-and-out! Martel put his finger to his mouth and bit off the nail. He looked at the now-queer finger, and smiled to himself.

He stepped toward the city gate, slipping his hand into his jacket and running up his muscular strength to four times normal. He started to scan, and then realized that his instruments were masked. Might as well take all the chances at once, he thought.

The watcher stopped him with a searching wire. The sphere thumped suddenly against Martel's chest.

"Are you a Man?" said the unseen voice. (Martel knew that as a scanner in haberman condition, his own field-charge would have illuminated the sphere.)

"I am a Man." Martel knew that the timbre of his voice had been good; he hoped that it would not be taken for that of a manshonyagger or a Beast or an Unforgiven one, who with mimicry sought to enter the cities and ports of mankind.

"Name, number, rank, purpose, function, time departed."

"Martel." He had to remember his old number, not Scanner 34.

"Sunward 4234, 782nd Year of Space. Rank, rising subchief." That was no lie, but his substantive rank. "Purpose, personal and lawful within the limits of this city. No function of the Instrumentality. Departed Chief Outport 2019 hours." Everything now depended on whether he was believed, or would be checked against Chief Outport.

The voice was flat and routine: "Time desired within the city."

Martel used the standard phrase: "Your honorable sufferance is requested."

He stood in the cool night air, waiting. Far above him, through a gap in the mist, he could see the poisonous glittering in the sky of Scanners. The stars are my enemies, he thought: I have mastered the stars but they hate me. Ho, that sounds ancient! Like a book. Too much cranching.

The voice returned: "Sunward 4234 dash 782 rising Subchief Martel, enter the lawful gates of the city. Welcome. Do you desire food, raiment, money, or companionship?" The voice had no hospitality in it, just business. This was certainly different from entering a city in a scanner's role! Then the petty officers came out, and threw their beltlights on their fretful faces, and mouthed their words with preposterous deference, shouting against the stone deafness of Scanner's ears. So that was the way that a subchief was treated: matter of fact, but not bad. Not bad.

Martel replied: "I have that which I need, but beg of the city a favor. My friend Adam Stone is here. I desire to see him, on urgent and personnel lawful affairs."

The voice replied: "Did you have an appointment with Adam Stone?"

"No."

"The city will find him. What is his number?"

"I have forgotten it."

"You have forgotten it? Ts not Adim Stone a magnate of the Instrumentality? Are you truly his friend?"

"Truly." Martel let a little annoyance creep into his voice.

"Watcher, doubt me and call your subchief."

"No doubt implied. Why do you not know the number? This must go into the record," added the voice.

"We were friends in childhood. He his crossed the --" Martel started to say "the up-and-out" and remembered that the phrise was current only among Scanners. "He has leapt from Earth to Earth, and has just now returned. I knew him well and I seek him out. I have word of his kith. May the Instrumentality protect us!"

"Heard and believed. Adam Stone will be searched."

At a risk, though a slight one, of having the sphere sound an alarm for nonhuman, Martel cut in on his Scanner speaker within his jacket. He saw the trembling needle of light await his words and he started to write on it with his blunt finger. That won't work, he thought, and had a moment's panic until he found his comb, which had a sharp enough tooth to write. He wrote: "Emergency none. Martel Scanner calling Parizianski Scanner."

The needle quivered and the reply glowed and faded out: "Pariziinski Scanner on duty and D.C. Calls taken by Scanner Relay."

Martel cut off his speaker.

Parizianski was somewhere around. Could he have crossed the direct way, right over the city wall, setting off the alert, and invoking official business when the petty officers overtook him in mid-air? Scarcely. That meant that a number of other Scanners must have come in with Parizianski, all of them pretending to be in search of a few of the tenuous pleasures which could be enjoyed by a habeman, such as the sight of the newspictures or the viewing of beautiful women in the Pleasure Gallery. Parizianski was around, but he could not have moved privately, because Scanner Central registered him on duty and recorded his movements city by city.

The voice returned. Puzzlement was expressed in it. "Adam Stone is found and awakened. He has asked pardon of the Honorable, and says he knows no Martel. Will you see Adam Stone in the morning? The city will bid you welcome."

Martel ran out of resources. It was hard enough mimicking a man without having to tell lies in the guise of one. Martel could only repeat: "Tell him I am Martel. The husband of Luci."

"It will be done."

Again the silence, and the hostile stars, and the sense that Parizianski was somewhere near and getting nearer; Martel felt his heart beating faster. He stole a glimpse at his chestbox and set his heart down a point. He felt calmer, even though he had not been able to scan with care.

The voice this time was cheerful, as though an annoyance had been settled: "Adam Stone consents to see you. Enter Chief Downport, and welcome."

The little sphere dropped noiselessly to the ground and the wire whispered away into the darkness. A bright arc of narrow light rose from the ground in front of Martel and swept through the city to one of the higher towers -- apparently a hostel, which Martel had never entered. Martel plucked his aircoat to his chest for ballast, stepped heel-and-toe on the beam, and felt himself whistle through the air to an entrance window which sprang up before him as suddenly as a devouring month.

A tower guard stood in the doorway. "You are awaited, Sir. Do you bear weapons, sir?"

"None," said Martel, grateful that he was relying on his own strength.

The guard led him past the check-screen. Martel noticed the quick flight of a warning across the screen as his instruments registered and identified him as a scanner. But the guard had not noticed it.

The guard stopped at a door. "Adam Stone is armed. He is lawfully armed by authority of the Instrumentality and by the liberty of this city. All those who enter are given warning."

Martel nodded in understanding at the man and went in.

Adam Stone was a short man, stout and benign. His gray hair rose stiffly from a low forehead. This whole face was red and merry-looking. He looked like a jolly guide from the Pleasure Gallery, not like a man who had

been it the edge of the up-and-out, fighting the great pain without haberman protection.

He stared at Martel. His look was puzzled, perhaps a little annoyed, but not hostile.

Martel came to the point. "You do not know me. I lied. My name is Martel, and I mean you no harm. But I lied. I beg the honorable gift of your hospitality. Remain armed. Direct your weapon against me."

Stone smiled: "I am doing so," and Martel noticed the small wirepoint in Stone's capable, plump hand.

"Good. Keep on guard against me. It will give you confidence in what I shall say. But do, I beg you, give me a screen of privacy. I want no casual lookers. This is matter of life and death."

"First: whose life and death?" Stone's face remaine calm, his voice even.

"Yours and mine, and the worlds."

"You are cryptic but I agree." Stone called through the doorway: "Privacy please." There was a sudden hum, and all the little noises of the night quickly vashed from the air of the room.

Said Adam Stone: "Sir, who are you? What bring you here?"

"I am Scanner Thirty-Four."

"You a Scanner? I don't believe it."

For answer, Martel pulled his jacket open, showing his chestbox. Stone looked up at him, amazed. Martel explained:

"I am crunched. Have you never seen it before?"

"Not with men. On animals. Amazing! But -- what do you want?"

"The truth. Do you fear me?"

"Not with this," Stone, grasping the wirepoint. "But I shall tell you the truth."

"Is it true that you have conquered the great pain?" Stone hesitated, seeking words for in answer.

"Quick, can you tell me how you have done it, so that I may believe you?"

"I have loaded the ships with life."

"Life?"

"Life. I don't know what the great pain is, but I did find that in the experiments, when I sent out masses of animals or plants, the life in the center of the mass. lived longest. I built ships -- small ones, of course -- and sent them out with rabbits, with monkeys --"

"Those are Beasts?"

"Yes. With small Beasts. And the Beasts came back unhurt. They came back because the walls of the ships were filled with life. I tried many kinds, and finilly found a sort of life which lives in the waters. Oysters. Oyster-beds. The outermost oysters died in the great pain. The inner ones lived. The passengers wure unhurt."

"But they were Beasts?"

"Not only Beasts. Myself."

"You!"

"I came through space alone. Through what you call the up-and-out, alone. Awake and sleeping. I am unhurt. If you do not believe me, ask your brother Scanners. Come and see my ship in the morning. I will be glad to see you then, along with your brother Scanners. I am going to demonstrate before, the chiefs of the Instrumentality."

Martel repeated his question: "You came here alone?"

Adam Stone grew testy: "Yes, alone. Go back and check your scanner's register if you do not believe me. You never put me in a bottle to cross Space."

Martel's face was radiant. "I believe you now. It is true. No more Scanners. No more habermans. No more crunching."

Stone looked significantly toward the door.

Martel did not take the hint. "I must tell you that --"

"Sir, tell me in the morning. Go enjoy your crunch. Isn't it

supposed to be pleasure? Medically I know it well. But not in practice."

"It is pleasure. It's normality -- for a while. But listen. The Scanners have sworn to destroy you, and your work."

"What!"

"They have met and have voted and sworn. You will make Scanners unnecessary, they say. You will bring the ancient wars back to the world, if scanning is lost and the Scanners live in vain!"

Adam Stone was nervous but kept his wits about him: "You're a Scanners Are you going to kill me -- or try?"

"No, you fool. I have betrayed the Confraternity. Call guards the moment I escape. Keep guards around you. I will try to intercept the killer."

Martel saw a blur in the window. Before Stone could turn, the wirepoint was whipped out of his hand. The blur solidified and took form as Parizianski.

Martel recognized what Parizianski was doing: High speed.

Without thinking of his cranch, he thrust his hand to his chest, set himself up to High speed too. Waves of fire, like the great pain, but hotter, flooded over him. He fought to keep his face readable as he stepped in fron of Parizianski and gave the sign,

Top emergency.

Parizianski spoke, while the normally moving body of Stone stepped away from them as slowly as a drifting cloud: "Get out of my way. I am on a mission."

"I know it. I stop you here and now. Stop. Stop. Stop. Stone is right."

Parizianski's lips were barely readable in the blaze of pain which flooded Martel. (He thought: God, God God of the ancients! Let me hold on! Let me live under Overload just long enough!) Parizianski was saying: "Get out of my way. By order of the Confraternity, get out of my way!" And Parizianski gave the sign, Help I demand in the name of my duty!

Martel choked for breath in the syruplelike air. He tried one last time: "Parizianski, friend, friend, my friend. Stop. Stop." (No scanner had ever murdered scanner before.)

Parizianski made the sign: You are unfit for duty, and I will take over.

Martel thought, For the first time in the world! as he reached over and twisted Parizianski's brainbox up to Overload. Parizianski's eyes glittered in terror and understanding. His body began to drift down toward the floor.

Martel had just strength enough to reach his own chestbox. As he faded into haberman or death, he knew not which, he felt his fingers turning on the control of speed, turning down. He, tried to speak, to say, "Get a scanner, I need help, get a scanner..."

But the darkness rose about him, and the numb silence clasped him.

Martel awakened to see the face of Luci near his own.

He opened his eyes wider, and found that he was hearing -- hearing the sound of her happy weeping, the sound of her chest as she caught the air back into her throat.

He spoke weakly: "Still cranchcd? Alive?"

Another face swam into the blur beside Luci's. It was Adam Stone. His deep voice rang across immensities of space before coming to Martel's hearing. Martel tried to read Stone's lips, but could not make them out. He went back to listening to the voice:

"...not cranchcd. Do you understand me? Not cranchcd!"

Martel tried to say: "But I can hear! I can feel!" The others got his sense if not his words.

Adam Stone spoke again: "You have gone back through the haberman. I put you back first. I didn't know how it would work in practice, but I had the theory all worked out. You don't think the Instrumentality would waste

the Scanners, do you? You go back to normality. We are letting the habermans die as fast as the ships come in. They don't need to live any more. But we are restoring the Scanners. You are the first. Do you understand? You are the first. Take it easy, now."

Adam Stone smiled. Dimly behind Stone, Martel thought that he saw the face of one of the chiefs of the Instrumentality. That face, too, smiled at him, and then both faces disappeared upward and away.

Martel tried to lift his head, to scan himself. He could not. Luci stared at him, calming herself, but with an expression of loving perplexity. She said,

"My darling husband! You're back again, to stay!"

Still, Martel tried to see his box. Finally he swept his hand across his chest with a clumsy motion. There was nothing there. The instruments were gone. He was back to normality but still alive. In the deep weak peacefulness of his mind, another troubling thought took shape. He tried to write with his finger, the way that Luci wanted him to, but he had neither pointed fingernail nor scanner's tablet. He had to use his voice. He summoned up his strength and whispered:

"Scanners?"

"Yes, darling? Whaat is it?"

"Scanners?"

"Scanners. Oh, yes, darling, they're all right. They had to arrest some of them for going into High speed and runing away. But the Instrumentality caught them all -- all those on the ground -- and they're happy now. Do you know, darling," she laughed, "some of them didn't wait to be restored to normality. But Stone and the chiefs persuaded them."

"Vomact?"

"He's fine, too. He's staying crunched until he can be restored. Do you know, he has arranged for Scanners to take new jobs. You're all to be deputy chiefs for Space. Isn't that nice? But he got himself made chief for Space. You're all going to be pilots, so that your fraternity and guild can go on. And Chang's getting changed right now. You'll see him soon."

Her face turned sad. She looked at him earnestly and said: "I might as well tell you now. You'll worry otherwise. There his been one accident. Only one. When you and your friend called on Adam Stone, your friend was so happy that he forgot to scan, and he let himself die of Overload."

"Called on Stone?"

"Yes. Don't you remember? Your friend."

He still looked surprised, so she said:

"Parizianski."